

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF BYANG KATO'S DEMONOLOGY AND ITS
THEOLOGICAL RELEVANCE FOR AN EVANGELICAL DEMONOLOGY**

by

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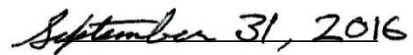
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I hereby declare that A Critical Analysis of Byang Kato's Demonology and Its Theological Relevance for an Evangelical Demonology is my own original work and that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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S.D.G.

Scott D. MacDonald

Dedication

To my bride, Michal, and to the Church of God, the bride of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Abstract

What composes an Evangelical demonology? This dissertation aims to provide a fresh Evangelical demonology, reflecting and systematizing the biblical material on the demonic. To begin the process, Byang Kato's background and demonology is examined, since Kato himself has a unique relationship to demonic practices by virtue of his upbringing. His demonological efforts are headlined by a booklet on the spirits, and throughout the rest of Kato's theological output, Satan and his wicked comrades are frequently mentioned. Overall, Kato's work presents timely contributions for our demonological goals, especially considering the multicultural context.

In an increasingly intermingled world, with many backgrounds being represented in multicultural Christian communities, Kato's demonology is a superior model. Human perceptions concerning the demonic are often inseparable from prevailing cultural attitudes, and the temptation to exalt one's own culture must be avoided, especially due to the new norm of multicultural churches, para-church organizations, and seminaries. Kato's demonology gravitates to the biblical material, and thus it delivers both challenges and affirmations to every party.

Furthermore, Kato's writings on the demonic are inherently linked to soteriology. After discerning some of the major themes of Kato's soteriology, his exclusivism (and how it relates to demonology) is specifically discussed. Since Kato views the world outside of Christ as the dominion of Satan and the demonic, he advocates that one must turn to Christ for redemption.

Then an Evangelical demonology itself is constructed. After highlighting particular contributions from Kato, criteria are outlined for the project before launching into the primary content. Demonic activity throughout the Bible is surveyed, and the argument is offered that

demons do act as malevolent personal beings intent on instigating evil in the created order.

Through this study of the demonic, the assertion that “demonology matters” is presented, as the doctrine of the demonic relates to the reliability of the Bible and the quality of our salvation. A biblical, Evangelical demonology also rises to modern challenges, including skepticism and speculation. Christians are planted on the sure ground of the Scriptures, prepared for the spiritual realities of the world in which we live.

Key Terms

Demonology; Demons; Demonization; Devil; Spirits; Pneumatology; Necromancy;
Multiculturalism; Evangelicalism; Byang Kato; Occultism; Possession; Exorcism; Satan;
Satanology.

1. Introduction

1.1 Why Demonology?

Humanity does not have to venture far before encountering speculations and attestations of the demonic. Regardless of whether broader Western society considers them credible, the reports of malevolent spiritual activity abound.

Consider the news. The Cable News Network (CNN) alone has published a host of related news items. In their photos section, Troi Anderson has publicly displayed photographs of the Maria Lionza cult in Venezuela, wherein many are reportedly inhabited by spirits – both helpful and violent.¹ Journey to Swaziland, as Kyle Meyer depicts the casting out of demons in carefully framed black and white pictures.² Turn to CNN's videos to witness the apparent exorcisms of Bob Larson, complete with screaming and dramatic confrontations.³ Watch strange sights and sounds of various demonic encounters in a Pennsylvanian house, which even affected the film crew.⁴ Read CNN's article by Jake Simons on the Aymara people of Bolivia, which details the unusual religious blend used to counter misfortune and "harmful spirits."⁵

What about Kristine McGuire? She was featured in a piece by the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), as she proclaimed an unusual aversion toward her past dealings with the

¹ Anderson, Troi. "Summing Spirits in Venezuela"

<http://cnnphotos.blogs.cnn.com/2014/01/16/summoning-spirits-in-venezuela/>

² Meyer, Kyle. "Swaziland Church Battles Demons"

<http://cnnphotos.blogs.cnn.com/2013/11/19/swaziland-church-battles-demons/>

³ CNN. "Watch Pastor Perform Exorcisms" <http://www.cnn.com/videos/living/2014/01/25/ac-pkg-tuchman-reverend-exorcisms.cnn>

⁴ WPMT (CNN Affiliate). "Haunted House's 'Ghost' Attacks News Crew"

<http://www.cnn.com/videos/bestoftv/2014/08/05/dnt-pa-news-crew-visits-haunted-house.wpmt>

⁵ Simons, Jake Wallis. "The 'Catholic Witchdoctors' of Bolivia: Where God and Ancient Spirits Collide" <http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/17/travel/catholic-witchdoctors-of-bolivia/>

occult.⁶ She stumbled upon something demonic, beyond her abilities as a self-identified “ghost hunter,” and she cried out to Jesus for help.

Eowyn Stoddard speaks about “demonic bullying” in her piece circulated through the Gospel Coalition.⁷ As a church planter, she had sensed an evil presence and suffered through a number of unusual circumstances, but her concerns culminated as her toddler described horrific nightmares, which were incongruent with the knowledge and experiences of such a young child.⁸ Even as she professes her continuing faith in the sovereign God of the Bible, she admits, “What we experienced was ‘normal’ for our context, and many other missionaries can testify to similar kinds of things.” Based on biblical, communal, and experiential data, she concluded that demons were involved.

Worse yet, brutal forms of ritualism, witchcraft, and occultism exist, and the credit is heaped upon demonic and satanic forces. For instance, in April 2012, a so-called “baby factory” was shut down in southeastern Nigeria.⁹ Three individuals were arrested by police for housing seven young women who were producing babies which would be sold. The children may be trafficked for various purposes, but Oyekachi Orji, the assistant police superintendent, said, “The suspects usually lure young girls to get pregnant with a promise of 70,000 naira after having their

⁶ CBN TV. “Kristine McGuire: A Ghost Hunter Calls on Christ”
<http://www.cbn.com/tv/1744351612001>

⁷ Stoddard, Eowyn. “Dealing with Demons” <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/dealing-with-demons/>

⁸ Ibid. Stoddard admits that they first assumed that she was “imagining things” when blood was spilled on her door along with detecting an evil presence. But her skepticism quickly faded away, and her narrative insists that “the horrid climax was the nightmares that tormented our 2-year old son. For many months he’d wake up screaming bloody murder, and we could not easily settle him back down. At two and a half, he was finally able to verbalize what he’d been dreaming about for the past few months. One of his most vivid dreams was about a woman with black hair and red eyes who wore only a bra and black pants and would offer him a basket of rotten fruit and force him to eat. His nightmare was X-rated, not a typical toddler-being-chased-by-a-bear dream.”

⁹ News24. “Nigeria Rescues Girls from ‘Baby Factory’” <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Nigeria-rescues-girls-from-baby-factory-20120413>

babies, which they sell to ritualists.” Even News24 admitted in the article that “... less commonly [babies purchased from these factories] are tortured and sacrificed in black magic rituals.” Nigerian theologian Nwankpa files such acts under witchcraft and comments, “There are many evidences in Nigeria of the atrocities that witches commit day after day, ranging from killing both born and unborn children, to deforming children in the womb and stopping the development of fetuses...”¹⁰ But how does all of this relate to unseen evil entities? They regularly collect a portion of the blame, leading Nwankpa to conclude, “... The evil power of Satan has not been removed from him.”¹¹

We cannot avoid malevolent spirits in current events, and Christian history offers no respite for those who would wish to evade them. In a groundbreaking work entitled *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, Ferguson outlines the Jewish and Greek attitudes toward the demonic and the early Christian response to the phenomena. Summarizing “generally held views” among Christian authors in the centuries after Christ and the Apostles, Ferguson articulates:

They accepted the reality of the spiritual world, in which there were both good angels and wicked demons. All were creatures of God and originally good. Some angels in the exercise of their free will, at some point, rebelled against God and fell from their heavenly abode... The demons were responsible for the physical evils in the world, stood behind all false religion, induced the persecution of true religion, and tried to tempt men into sinning against God. Those (men) who did so were punished by serving the demons. The demons’ spheres of activity, therefore, were the cosmos, governmental structures, and individuals. But on all levels their power was ultimately subject to God. Their defeat had been sealed and assured by the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus... Meanwhile,

¹⁰ Nwankpa, Vincent Onyebuchi. *Understanding Cultural Perspectives, God’s Word, and Missions: a Powerful Tool for Theologizing*, Page 99. Clarification added.

¹¹ Ibid.

*those who believed in Jesus and followed the will of God had power over demons. This was dramatically demonstrated in the ability of Christians to drive away demons in the name of Jesus Christ. Wherever paganism was practiced and human beings gave themselves to the will of demons, there demonic influence was felt; but wherever the gospel was preached and the influence of Christ was felt, the demons were powerless.*¹²

Just as the present is confronted by the demonic, so also the past has dealt with the topic's presence.

Finally, the biblical pages themselves scarcely can stir without a reference to an evil supernatural being. King Saul was afflicted.¹³ The Psalmist records that the Israelites sacrificed their children to demonic powers.¹⁴ The Revelation of the Apocalypse even depicts a grand heavenly battle waged between Satan's host and the holy angels (chapter twelve). The gospels and Acts are replete with examples of demonic activity. A serious scholar of Scripture must account for the demonic and grant the subject ample consideration.

Why demonology? We cannot help but encounter it. Around the globe, throughout history, across cultures, the topic demands our attention, and a Christian systematic theology is

¹² Ferguson, Everett. *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, Pages 133-134. Clarification added.

¹³ First Samuel 16:14 reads, "Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him." (NASB) "Just as the Spirit was able to give the positive attributes of courage, charisma, insight, wisdom and confidence, negative results could also be produced by spiritual influence. These would include fear, paranoia, indecisiveness, suspicion and shortsightedness." (Walton, John, Victor Matthews, and Mark Chavalas. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. PC Study Bible Database.)

¹⁴ Psalm 106:37 says, "They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons..." (NASB) "This word for demon is used elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Deut 32:17, but it is a well-known type of spirit/demon in Mesopotamia, where the term (*shedu*) describes a protective guardian mostly concerning with the individual's health and welfare.... A *shedu* could destroy one's health just as easily as it could protect it, so sacrifices to keep it placated were advisable. They were depicted as winged creatures..." (Walton, John, Victor Matthews, and Mark Chavalas. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. PC Study Bible Database.)

merited, due to the subject's inclusion in the Holy Writ along with its persistent presence in the modern age.

1.2 The Personal Background of the Author

Bias, context, and perspective are always present and pertinent in any theological work. The title of this dissertation is “A Critical Analysis of Byang Kato’s Demonology and Its Theological Relevance for an Evangelical Demonology,” and this did not arise in a vacuum. A brief survey of authorial background is therefore necessary.

As an undergraduate theological student at an Evangelical institution in Chicago, I was introduced to some of the Christian theology being performed on the African continent.¹⁵ After encountering the seminal writings of Mbiti, the offerings of others like Bediako and Kato piqued my interest. This set the stage for my graduate work at Stellenbosch University.

Furthermore, starting in 2010, I served with an Evangelical church in Chicago. Though my responsibilities varied, I regularly found myself responding to Christians who recounted confrontations with demonic spirits. Personal experiences also began to proliferate, and a thorough and biblical study of the subject was needed, since I desperately lacked knowledge and training in this area.

Emerging from this purely practical genesis, I have continued to investigate the doctrines and debates in the demonological field. Relying on the biblical material has been essential,

¹⁵ Since “Evangelicalism” is a word with many uses, it must be clarified. In this work, it refers to “The movement in modern Christianity, transcending denominational and confessional boundaries, that emphasizes conformity to the basic tenets of the faith and a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency... Evangelicals regard Scripture as the divinely inspired record of God’s revelation, the infallible, authoritative guide for faith and practice.” (Pierard, R. V. “Evangelicalism,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Page 379.)

especially as various regions and cultures have readily treated “pneumatatology” with dismissiveness or excess.¹⁶

1.3 Research Methodology, Parameters, and Goal

How should a theologian approach demonology? In the case of this work, the initial analysis will concentrate on the contributions of Kato.

Why Kato? According to scholars like Kapteina, Kato was at the inception of African Evangelical Theology.¹⁷ Though a number of his writings will be scrutinized, two will take center stage by virtue of their content and influence. The first is *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, as it is Kato’s central effort concerning pneumatatology.¹⁸ The second is Kato’s greatest theological tome, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*.¹⁹ Kato sets himself apart as a vigorous biblicist in a field rife with speculative musings, completely willing to speak in opposition to cultural norms when scriptural and communal knowledge seemingly conflict.

These two works, along with other miscellaneous materials penned by Kato, will provide fertile ground from which demonological insights can be cultivated for the concluding part of this dissertation. The latter portion of this thesis will undertake a fresh contribution to Evangelical demonological studies, having been informed by Kato’s particular perspective and teaching on demonology. The overarching goal is to synthesize an Evangelical demonology

¹⁶ Throughout this work, the general category of “pneumatatology” will be employed to encompass the theologizing of various kinds of spirits, including demons, angels, Satan, ancestors, and other non-theistic beings. In that light, Satanology, demonology, angelology, and other classical fields will be folded together as subcategories under pneumatatology. However, demonology will be the narrower aim.

¹⁷ Kapteina, Detlef. “The Formation of Evangelical African Theology,” *AJET*, Pages 61-62.

¹⁸ *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits* will hereafter be shortened to *The Spirits*.

¹⁹ For the sake of brevity, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* will be stated as *Pitfalls*.

which trumpets biblical fidelity while concurrently respecting the significance of multicultural contexts.

1.4 Hermeneutical Considerations

In any substantial study that ventures to splay the covers of the Christian Scriptures, hermeneutics must feature in the presentation, for a dearth of introspection invariably births selfish or skewed interpretations.²⁰ Yet we must not bury heavenly text under too much earthly hermeneutical analysis, lest we obscure its glory with our own. With that delicate balance in mind, let us address a few interpretive issues and preclude untimely questions.

What is hermeneutics itself? Snodgrass says, “Hermeneutics is the process by which texts are understood and appropriated.”²¹ When we study this “process,” we aim to recognize (and focus) the lenses by which we observe and comprehend a particular work, and in this case, that is the Bible. This endeavor inevitably guides us to the giant question which always surfaces, “What does it mean?”

But we have already reached a critical junction. Any particular passage can elicit a slew of meanings from two similar people, and the divide can be even greater when age, culture, and training backgrounds differ. Thus, who dictates meaning? Since the Scriptures self-attest to be from God through the superintended authorship of men and, presumably, the divine perspective is more valuable than ours, we should not choose to dictate the meaning.²² Besides, our foreign,

²⁰ As the author is an Evangelical Protestant, additional resources (e.g. the Apocrypha) are respected as historical works, but they will not be elevated to the status of divine revelation alongside the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.

²¹ Snodgrass, Klyne R. “Introduction to a Hermeneutics of Identity,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Page 3.

²² Let us mimic the attitude of the Psalmist who cried, “Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all day.” (Psalm 25:4-5, NASB.)

imposed meanings gain us little, for “Divine authority does not attach to whatever meaning other people may attach to the words.”²³ Rather, humility, as lowly beings under an omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, infinite Spirit, is demanded of us. Similar to the Lord bellowing out a “whirlwind” retort to Job’s impetuosity, the Bible, by virtue of God’s nature, insists that we receive and accept its meaning.²⁴

Authorial intent must be our concern, both from the human instrument of divine revelation and from the Triune Being. While our current perspectives and agendas are diverse and fluid, the original authors’ background, style, and objectives are set and often self-evident within their writings. But we were not specifically in the human authors’ minds as the recipients of their treatises! Poythress raises this roadblock:

*They [the authors of Scripture] did not write with us directly in view. Nor did they foresee all our circumstances and needs. We can still overhear what they said to people in their own time, but that is not the same as hearing them speak to us. How do we know what they want us to do with their words, if they did not have us in mind?*²⁵

What can we do? Are we trapped in the torturous position of perceiving divine revelation but never truly receiving it? No. Instead, we must take refuge in the divine intentions and the significance those words have for us today. We should apply Scripture, with the original context

²³ Poythress, Vern. “Divine Meaning of Scripture,” *Westminster Theological Journal*. 48, Page 250. Clarification supplied.

²⁴ Job 38:1-11. “God was not asking for information but reminding his challenger (Job) that the divine will had not been represented by what he said. We all speak ‘words without knowledge’ unless they are the properly understood and interpreted words of the Bible. Since they had such limited revelation and were immersed in a pool of similarly benighted others, it is amazing that Job and the others spoke as much truth as they did. Nevertheless, as will become clear, all missed the mark and spoke out of their darkness.” (Alden, Robert L. *Job*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification added.)

²⁵ Poythress, Vern. “Divine Meaning of Scripture,” *Westminster Theological Journal*. 48, Page 244.

in mind, ever asking, “What applications of a biblical passage does God approve?”²⁶ Yet at the same time, we confess that only the Spirit of God can help us do this properly.²⁷

We seize upon the study of biblical demonology only because the human authors of the Bible communicated concerning it, and their intended message on the subject must be heard, by virtue of the One who superintended their authorship. Peter testifies:

*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*²⁸

As we study these hallowed texts concerning not-so-holy spirits, let us approach with Poythress’ refrain, “What matters is what God means. To find this out, we must interpret the words in accordance with what we know about God...”²⁹ God, according to who He is and what He says, is our authority in this demonological study, via the meaning and intention of His Word, and may our interpretations take “place in subjection to God’s authority, control, and presence.”³⁰

²⁶ Ibid, Page 248.

²⁷ First Corinthians 2:11-14. God’s people have a spiritual distinction that leads to understanding. “Between v 11 and v 12 we have to supply the tacit assumption that ‘we’ do in fact know the things of God. Hence the conclusion can be drawn that the Spirit of God is in us... ‘not the spirit of the world.’” (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

²⁸ Second Peter 1:20-21, NASB. “Peter likely was attacking the opponents, arguing that they interpreted prophesy to support their own views. In doing so they resisted the proper interpretation given by the apostles.... Peter’s argument, then, is that the readers must pay attention to the prophetic word as it is interpreted by the apostles, for the Old Testament prophecies are not a matter of personal interpretation but have been authoritatively interpreted by the apostles.... The meaning of v. 20, then, is that the interpretation by the apostles does not come from them but ultimately has a divine source, for prophecy comes from God.... By definition prophecy is a divine work and cannot be attributed to the ingenuity or native gifts of human beings.... We have strong biblical support here for what B. B. Warfield called *concursum*. Both human beings and God were fully involved in the process of inspiration.... *Concursum* means that both God and human beings contributed to the prophetic word. Ultimately, however, and most significantly, these human words are God’s words.... Peter, of course, referred only to the prophets here, but by extension we are justified in concluding that what Peter said about the prophets is also true of the New Testament canon. These writers also spoke from God and were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Evangelical theology rightly infers from this that the Scriptures are authoritative, infallible, and inerrant, for God’s words must be true.” (Schreiner, Thomas R. *1 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

²⁹ Poythress, Vern. “Divine Meaning of Scripture,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 48, Page 250.

³⁰ Ibid, “Christ the Only Savior of Interpretation,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 50:2, Page 306.

This drags us to the problem of divine authority. For many a Christian, it is not a conundrum at all, believing that God's truth was progressively revealed in time, readily accepting that the biblical writers were governed and guided by the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent Sovereign. However, how can physical manuscripts and ancient codices represent in human language the mind and authority of the Incomprehensible? The Holy Writ claims to have divine origins, and it beckons to our minds and hearts – our very lives – with an irrepressible call for worship, obedience, and glory to its Creator. But how can this be?

The Bible can be the Word of God because God was and is the Word.³¹ By this allusion to Johannine doctrine, the present case is that the character of the incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity demonstrates how the message and mission of the divine can be rightly imaged from the incomprehensible to the finitely accessible. As the Son took on flesh via the hypostatic union without the denial or degradation of His eternal, immutable nature, the words of God have been revealed without error in their assertions, free from any betrayal of God's intention and reputation. As the Son condescended to our estate (uniting with our nature, speaking our words, relating to our weakness), the Scriptures have sufficiently communicated to us on our level concerning what God would have us know, cherish, and follow. The revelation of Christ proclaims that God can be met, and the written revelation declares that God can be heard.

³¹ John 1:1, 14. "The eternal Logos was first introduced as coexistent with God (1:1); he was second identified with life and the source of light (1:8) in comparison to John [the Baptist], the witness (1:6-8); then third he was presented as being in the created world though he was unknown by his creatures (1:10). Now here as the Prologue reaches its climatic assertion the Logos is announced as *fully participating* in the realm of creation.... [The Gospel of John] is speaking of the divine presence on earth and is best rendered by 'tabernacled' or 'tented,' which reminds us of Israel's wilderness experience of God's presence in the tabernacle or tent of meeting..." (Borchert, Gerald L. *John 1-11*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification supplied.)

Furthermore, in both cases, God exerts authority over us. The incarnate Word was considered peculiar during His earthly dispensation, for He acted as One who had authority, in contrast to other teachers.³² The written Word also bears divine authority, repeatedly claiming “Thus says the Lord,” relaying the message of Christ and insisting on the inspiration of other authors. The Scriptures and the average book on the shelf do not share the same weighty authoritative language.

Especially in the global context, should biblical authority have neatly contained boundaries? Can the Scripture claim supremacy over the norms of the world’s cultures?³³ Absolutely. The Word of God both rebukes cultural corruption even as it upholds its strengths. God, by virtue of His Creator authority, can interject into the patterns of human society, whether by theophany or revelation. Only the Supreme Being is qualified to rule creation, and while humanity vainly attempts to manipulate, create, rule, or transform culture in some lasting sense, only God has the moral credentials to speak into culture without deserving question and skepticism. God and God’s Word can authoritatively proclaim who we are, what we are supposed to do, and why we exist. The Scriptures transcend our cultural norms, inherently influencing every contextual opinion that is in conflict with revelation.

However, the way in which Christian minds translate and apply the divine message into various cultures is worthy of careful critique. Hermeneutically speaking, this means that we should diligently monitor our use of Scripture. We are not without presuppositions which “have

³² Luke 4:32. “Jesus’ supreme authority comes from God, as it is expressed in the granting of the Spirit (3:22, 4:14, 18), and is exercised legitimately by him.” (Bovon, François, and Helmut Koester. *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*. Hermeneia, PC Study Bible Database.) Additionally, Jesus’ authority flowed not only from the commissioning of the Father and the empowerment of the Spirit, but from His own divinity.

³³ Section 1.6 shares a definition and discussion of culture itself.

been formed by historical, social, and cultural processes.”³⁴ Dangers abound, and if we fail to properly contextualize biblical imperatives, we can inadvertently (or intentionally and sinisterly) weaponize Christianity into an instrument of cultural destruction, usually to our own cultural and egotistical advantage.

Not only must we consider the present-day recipient culture, but we should also reflect upon the original biblical cultures (e.g. Ancient Near East thought and Hellenism). Since the human contributors to Scripture were not preempted of their character, form, and style by the governing work of the Holy Spirit, their background and influences must be weighed as well in order that we do not elevate Greek, Hebrew, or any other culture at the expense of a current culture.

In addition, the outlining of hermeneutical considerations demands that we state some philosophical context for the work provided. While the desire to be thoroughly biblical is commendable, we must admit that it is through a lens composed of our own faith, reason, culture, and tradition by which we encounter the revelation of God in His Word. Systematic Theology must account for these realities, embracing the divine gifts of logic and culture even as they are reformed and revised by the Scripture themselves. We lean upon reason, knowing that we will be found unreasonable. We rely on the historical contributions to the faith, daring to let the Scriptures refresh ancient doctrinal formulations. We embrace hermeneutical methods, prepared to be reinterpreted by the very object we study. Our philosophy must constantly and completely submit to the Word of God.

³⁴ Smit, Dirk J. “Reading the Bible and the (Un)official Interpretive Culture,” *Neotestamentica*. 28:2, Page 309.

1.5 Terminology

A foray into demonological waters entails circumspect navigation, and one course-plotting tool is the definition of terms. If we do not identify the terms involved in the voyage, we are liable to confusion, error, and dalliance. Especially concerning demonology, conceptions concerning particular words are only constant in their variance, and thus, we must outline the intended meaning of the terms which will feature in this work.

Spirit(s). The flexibility of this word in modern usage is astounding. From its prominent role in the term *zeitgeist* to its association with pleasant feelings, the word has a plethora of diversity.³⁵ Even within the Scriptures, a number of meanings persist, but in the Old Testament (e.g. 1 Kings 22:22) and the New Testament (e.g. Acts 23:9), the word translated as spirit can refer to non-human and non-divine persons of varying levels of moral quality. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* comments concerning NT usage, “*Pneuma* was also a term for non-corporeal, conscious, malevolent beings Spirits were not considered invariably malevolent; some are ‘of God’ which makes it necessary to distinguish between spirits...”³⁶ By virtue of our material, the word spirit will usually be wielded in this supernatural sense.

Angel. In general, we will attempt to retain the biblical usage of angel, from the Old and New Testaments. The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (henceforth referred to as the DDD) provides a pair of helpful definitions. Concerning the Hebrew word *malak*, it says, “The Bible characteristically uses *mal’āk* to designate a human messenger (e.g. 1 Sam 11:4; 1 Kgs 19:2.) A smaller number of the over 200 occurrences of the word in the OT refer to God’s supernatural emissaries.”³⁷ The biblical Greek equivalent *angelos* receives a similar treatment

³⁵ *Zeitgeist* is commonly translated from German into English as “spirit of the age.” Also, sometimes it is said, “He was in high spirits,” and this refers to a person being jovial.

³⁶ Simpson Jr., J. W. “Spirit,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. PC Study Bible Database.

³⁷ Meier, S.A. “Angel I,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Page 46.

from the DDD. “*Angelos*... is in Greek, Early Jewish and Christian literature the most common designation of an otherworldly being who mediates between God and humans.... It is sometimes used of human messengers...”³⁸ From the Scriptures, angel can refer to either human or supernatural messengers, but for this purpose of this study, supernatural actors will be the common usage of this umbrella term, which covers both malevolent and elect agents.³⁹ And generally in the Old Testament, “sons of God” corresponds to these heavenly beings.⁴⁰

Demon. Kuemmerlin-McLean rightfully states the difficulty of the study of the demonic in the Old Testament, “... it does not seem that there is a single term in biblical Hebrew which can consistently and unquestionably translated as ‘demon.’”⁴¹ We do not have the ability to parse out the original terms in depth. However, as we translate into English, demons are a rare feature of the Old Testament texts, with spirit as the prevalent moniker for demon-like beings, though the word demon itself is translated in Deuteronomy 32:17 and Psalm 106:37 (and the related term satyr or goat-demon/idols is mentioned in Leviticus 17:7 and 2 Chronicles 11:15). The term demon originates from the Greek *daimon/daimonion*, and thus, the New Testament is awash with easily identifiable references to demons.⁴² In Greek circles, demon had some variance in meaning, but by the time and context of the apostolic writings, Dickason asserts, “The final stage of its usage is found in the New Testament, where all demons are evil and work

³⁸ Van Henten, J. W. “Angel II,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Page 50.

³⁹ Spirit and angel are nearly parallel terms under these stated definitions.

⁴⁰ “Although no single term corresponding precisely to the English word ‘angels’ occurs in the Hebrew Bible, there is a rich vocabulary for such beings. Some of the expressions either denote their divine status... ‘sons of God’... ‘gods’... or denote their special sanctity... ‘holy ones’.... Other terms denote their functions.” (Newsom, Carol A. “Angels,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume I, Page 248.) By signaling that they are “divine” in some sense, this does not present them as ontological rivals or equals with the supreme Being – the Creator of the spirits.

⁴¹ Kuemmerlin-McLean, Joanne K. “Demons,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume II, Page 138.

⁴² “There are over one hundred references to demons in the Bible, most of them occurring in the New Testament.” (Dickason, C. Fred. *Angels: Elect and Evil*, Page 151.)

as Satan's agents."⁴³ One exception to that rule is found in Acts 17:18, where Athenian philosophers presume that Paul is advocating for foreign demons/gods.⁴⁴ In this work, we will primarily use the word demon to refer to corrupt supernatural spirits, in keeping with the predominant biblical concept.

With these terms in hand, we can commence the road ahead. However, we must still weigh the crucial subject of culture, which looms large over the field of demonology.

1.6 Culture and Multiculturalism

The intellectual African, the rural American, and every variety of human on the earth have one thought about culture in common: we all appreciate our own ways of life, treasuring them even as we are occasionally annoyed by aspects of our own culture. While we usually operate unconsciously under the parameters of culture, we ought to ask and unveil what should be obvious. What is culture itself? Kato summarizes, "Culture is the whole system of living made up of what a society knows and does."⁴⁵ Tanner broadens the matter even further.

Arguing that any particular culture contains disagreeing parties under its umbrella, she states:

... [Culture] forms the basis for conflict as it forms the basis for shared beliefs and sentiments. Whether or not culture is a common focus of agreement, culture binds people together as a common focus for engagement. The struggle over culture, whether and to whatever extent it produces true commonality of beliefs or sentiments, presumes culture as common stakes: all parties at least agree on the

⁴³ Ibid, Page 153.

⁴⁴ One commentator portrays the situation with an intriguing question. "In this scene Luke seeks not to provide detailed information about legal proceedings, but to create a mood. Is Luke playing on a misunderstanding, attributing to the audience an interpretation of the word 'anastasis' as a name for a goddess rather than a word meaning resurrection (RSV)? (Chrysostom understood the text this way.) The plural [*daimonia*], 'divinities,' certainly does not prove this." (Conzelmann, Hans, Eldon Jay Epp, and Christopher R. Matthews. *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. Hermeneia, Logos Database. Clarification added.)

⁴⁵ Kato, Byang. *African Cultural Revolution & The Christian Faith*, Page 7.

*importance of the cultural items that they struggle to define and connect up with one another.*⁴⁶

While these complexities ought to be acknowledged, our study will emphasize the unity of cultures, in contrast to each culture's internal incongruences. Thus, when speaking concerning cultural differences, the subject at hand is inter-diversity not intra-diversity.

As we approach the theology of Kato, an African, we should reaffirm his concerns concerning culture. Converted from traditional religion to Christianity, he hears and understands the cries of fellow Africans who lament that "missionaries have destroyed our culture."⁴⁷ Spoiling the noble effort of sharing the gospel, some recipients of the good news have been forced or misled into completely abandoning their pre-Christian culture. Entire cultures have been irreparably altered, in ways more in keeping with Western culture than biblical imperative. Yet Kato correctly points us to the iconoclast Ephesians in Acts 19.⁴⁸ When false religion is completely integrated into the culture and history of a people, the transformative power of the gospel will naturally enact societal change, without any unjust actions of cultural colonialism. As Mbiti says, "... In traditional (African) society, there are no irreligious people.... A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence."⁴⁹ In that light, Kato uncomfortably asserts, "If religion is what gives direction to life, Christianity must necessarily change the life-style or culture of the African."⁵⁰ Our allegiance to Christianity should trump any affection to our past way of life.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*, Page 57.

⁴⁷ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 174.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Mbiti, John. *African Religions and Philosophy*, Page 2.

⁵⁰ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 175.

⁵¹ "... Is it worth preserving the 'juju' if the converted Christian will be tempted to go back to 'Egypt' or 'the house of Laban?' Where lies the unique claim of Christ which is supposed to supersede even kin

The Christian convert discovers a new foundation, a new existence, and a Christian community has a new relationship to its culture and history, redefined by the arbiter of biblical revelation.

But a monolithic uninfluenced culture (untouched by other dominant forces) is increasingly becoming a norm of the past. Urbanization, drawing people from rural areas to city communities, has created a great junction of cultures in centers throughout the world. Globalization, with the expanding ease of travel and foreign commerce, has led to cultural cross-pollination on an unparalleled scale. Thus in many contexts, we must speak about multiculturalism (or interculturalism).

The theological project, which inherently involves contextualizing God's truth into cultural categories, must account for the complicating factor of multiculturalism. How should the pastor frame Christian doctrine when numerous cultures are represented in the pews? How should the evangelist declare Christ to the masses when the Asian, the African, and the European are all within his oratory reach? How should the theologian craft his papers, when his readers are no longer culturally homogeneous? Hollenweger, while outlining intercultural theology, offers the answer in his fifth point, "The point of contact between our traditions and the new theologies from the Third World is Scripture."⁵² How can we bridge the evangelistic, theological, and pastoral gaps in multicultural communities and contexts? It starts and finishes with a fidelity to the Word of God, granting it supremacy over us and our cultural backgrounds. Scripture alone has the right to rebuke and rule over every culture, preserving what is good and

relationships (Matt. 12:46-50)? Should national pride or cultural heritage come before Christ? New Testament Christianity has a strong negative answer to that. 'I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.' (Phil. 3:8)" (Ibid.)

⁵² Hollenweger, Walter. "Intercultural Theology," *Theology Today*. 43:1, Page 29.

excising what is not.⁵³ Furthermore, it supplies the only sure and perfect grounds for Christian commonality and unity within diversity.

1.7 An Introduction to Byang Kato: the Context and Content of His Work

Having already introduced Kato and quoted his work, we are left with questions. Who is Kato, and why was he selected as a primary feature of this study? To understand Kato the theologian, we begin with his birth into the Jaba tribe of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Let us journey back to 1936.

1.7.1 Kato's Juju History

Byang's father was a traditional fetish priest, and his son "was dedicated to serve the devil as a baby."⁵⁴ The odds of survival past infancy were not good, and seven of Byang's younger siblings perished. Byang lived, and through the eyes of others, he was apparently being preserved by Satan (*Kuno*) himself. The future of Byang was set: He would be a juju priest, upholding the honor of his family.

As Byang grew up, he was afforded every religious advantage by his father who trained him. Kato's biographer, Sophie de la Haye, says concerning his upbringing:

*Byang's father took every opportunity to instruct his son in fetish practices. At harvest-time, before any grain was eaten, he taught him how to offer the first-fruits at the base of the sycamore tree, believed to be the dwelling place of spirits. He also instructed him in the art of offering [blood] sacrifices.*⁵⁵

⁵³ "We must accept both the positive and negative aspects of all cultures." Kato, Byang. *Contextualization of the Gospel: Theological Perspective*, Page 1.

⁵⁴ Kato, Byang. "The Devil's Baby," *Africa Now*. Jan-Mar 1962, Pages 10-11.

⁵⁵ de la Haye, Sophie. *Byang Kato: Ambassador for Christ*, Page 17. Clarification added.

Byang successfully became a man, surviving the juju rites that accompanied puberty. But the one true God interrupted; The Lord had selected Kato for another purpose.

1.7.2 Kato's Christian Conversion

A missionary came to Kwoi, Kato's hometown. Mary Haas, who shared about Christ in the Jaba language, was with the Sudan Interior Mission, and Byang's curiosity was drawn by her phonograph which could also communicate in the trade language of Hausa. Another biographer, Bremen, comments, "The black box was fascinating to Byang and his friends."⁵⁶

While Kato attended the mission school, Byang's parents quickly moved from uninterested to hostile, thinking that he "was bringing shame upon the family by not worshipping juju."⁵⁷ But a pastor friend kept requesting Byang's return, and eventually, coupled with Byang's insistence, the parents caved. While Kato would eventually call Mary his "spiritual mother," he did not claim Christ and accept salvation until another teacher expounded on Noah and the Ark. He publically identified with Christianity, thereby rejecting the religion of his ancestors.

The family's reaction was initially harsh, which was unsurprising since the religious hopes and heritage of the family rested upon Byang.

*When his father learned that Byang had made a public commitment to Jesus Christ at school and saw that he was following Christ openly, he was furious. He beat him, refused to give him food, and took his shirt away.*⁵⁸

Yet Byang gave up everything and chose Christ, being baptized at the age of twelve before a crowd of hundreds. He even had to work to cover his own school expenses. But unfortunately,

⁵⁶ Bremen, Christien M. "A Portrait of Dr. Byang H. Kato," *AJET* 15:2, Pages 135-151.

⁵⁷ Kato, Byang. "The Devil's Baby," *Africa Now*. Jan-Mar 1962, Pages 10-11.

⁵⁸ de la Haye, Sophie. *Byang Kato: Ambassador for Christ*, Page 19.

his life still lacked transformation and victory. Kato confessed, “Youthful lusts held me in their grip, and my testimony was a mockery to the Name of Christ.”⁵⁹

In 1953, the seventeen year old Byang was caught up in a revival. People were repenting of their sins and giving sacrificially to support missionary efforts. While Kato had identified with Christianity, this is when Kato truly yielded to God, vowing to serve God alone. This led to a courageous step: Bible college.

1.7.3 Kato’s Theological Background and Contribution

From his youth onward, Byang Kato was vigorous in his pursuit of education. Despite the protests and gibes of peers, Igbaja Bible College was the path forward for Kato. Even after marrying Jummai during his final year, he still “excelled in the classroom” and juggled many responsibilities.⁶⁰ He went on to secure his Bachelor’s degree abroad at London Bible College, and by 1970, Kato was at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), earning his Master’s degree. Due to his incredible persistence, he had his Th.D. from DTS by May of 1974.⁶¹

Supporting Christian education and the church of Africa continued to be his passion. He was a gifted writer with a host of articles – crowned by his greatest work *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*. At his height, he was considered “the most outstanding evangelical theological leader in Africa.”⁶² He wielded his immense intellect against the pressing dangers of his time: syncretism and universalism, and that context is crucial for understanding the totality of his work. The battle for African Christianity would be fought by academics, and Kato marshalled the

⁵⁹ Kato, Byang. “The Devil’s Baby,” *Africa Now*. Jan-Mar 1962, Pages 10-11.

⁶⁰ de la Haye, Sophie. *Byang Kato: Ambassador for Christ*, Page 26.

⁶¹ Bremen, Christien M. “A Portrait of Dr. Byang H. Kato,” *AJET* 15:2, Pages 135-151.

⁶² Ibid. The statement is attributed to Bruce Nicholls.

Evangelical church to remedy its “theological anemia.”⁶³ His concerns and warnings still sound throughout Africa.

However, Kato’s message of biblical centrality and theological warning were not readily accepted by many of his academic peers outside of Evangelicalism. For instance, Bediako criticized that Kato’s perspective did not properly account for cultural realities and could not “provide a sufficient foundation for the tradition of creative theological engagement that the African context seemed to be requiring.”⁶⁴ Yet, as we will see in chapter 3, Kato’s message is more relevant than ever as we consider the relationship of the Scripture to culture.

But as quickly as he rose to prominence, Kato was hastily ushered into heavenly glory. In December 1975, his body was found drowned, and the circumstances were curious, since he was a skilled swimmer.⁶⁵ Among the global Evangelical community, shock was felt by all. A man once consigned to Satan’s darkness had been raised by Christ to be Evangelicalism’s shining beacon throughout western Africa. But his light was extinguished, and it seemed to be too soon.

1.8 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, we have outlined the parameters and preliminary background necessary to undertake this venture into biblical demonology. First, the relevance of the matter was exposed, in order that we might understand this is not a passing or tertiary matter. Throughout the world, history, and Scripture, we encounter demonology. Second, the background and context of the author was discussed. Third, the nature and methods of this

⁶³ Kapteina, Detlef. “The Formation of Evangelical African Theology,” *AJET*, Page 62.

⁶⁴ Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*, Page 55.

⁶⁵ Bremen, Christien M. “A Portrait of Dr. Byang H. Kato,” *AJET* 15:2, Pages 135-151.

theological construction were provided, in order that the reader can more readily digest the arguments which follow. Fourth, issues of biblical interpretation were raised and discussed, since the Scriptures (and the handling of it) will play a major role in this work. Fifth, three terms (demon, spirit, angel) were defined, as they will be regularly employed throughout argumentation. Sixth, culture was given special treatment because it operates so substantially in the demonological field and theological construction. We must know the concept of culture and articulate its effects. Finally, the life and work of the Nigerian theologian Byang Kato was quickly summarized to frame the conversations and studies which will be drawn from his work. Now we will analyze Kato's demonology.

2. The Demonology of Byang Kato

2.1 Introduction

Why must we peer into a subject of such turpitude – the demonic? Throughout our initial chapter, the reasoning was plain: we cannot avoid demonology. Outlining exactly how to proceed with this venture (hermeneutically and methodologically), our focus turned to the seminal figure of Dr. Byang Kato. Let us now reflect upon his demonology.

In his tragically short career, Kato investigated many theological fields. Yet, as an African Evangelical, his literature output did not equally extend into every realm. His primary theological emphasis lay among the issues of syncretism, universalism, and contextualization, but when we examine and embrace the substance of his writings, demonology pours forth, being saturated into his personal and theological fabric.

In the pages ahead, we will unveil Kato's disposition and doctrine concerning the demonic. After a comprehensive survey of the original sources, we will parse out technical and non-technical demonological treatments, and we will conclude this chapter with critiques of Kato's demonology along with summary conclusions which we will carry into the remainder of the study.

2.2 An Overview of Kato's Demonological References

Specifically exploring what Kato has said about the demonic throughout his works is necessary. To facilitate this process, his writings have been divided into three categories. The first and most important section deals with Kato's lone treatise on the particular subject of spirits. After that, we will examine the demonological contributions in his *de facto* magnum opus –

Theological Pitfalls in Africa.⁶⁶ Finally, the balance of Kato's offerings will be sifted for any other valuable insights. Let us move to the initial section.

2.2.1 *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*

The brief booklet, *The Spirits*, only amounts to thirty-two pages, but this short work should not be judged by its brevity. Published by Africa Christian Press in 1975 (near Kato's death), Kato is attempting to assess the spirits, of which there is "a universal belief among heathen societies."⁶⁷ But what is the structure and content of his treatment of this contentious issue?

Kato ushers us back to his juju childhood. Taught that the spirits of those who had passed could still wander the earth and influence the world, this subject is steeped in fear for Kato. Yet, emotion and inner disposition do not determine his opinion, and he quickly turns to the Scriptures for guidance.

Having couched the topic in his own past, the argumentation commences by discussing the singular Spirit – the infinite God – quoting John 4:24. What are some of the relevant characteristics of this Spirit? Kato answers with a summary which includes personality, invisibility, trinity, holiness, intelligence (as Creator), infinitude, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. However, lest we are confused between the one Spirit and the spirit world, they are delineated when Kato says, "[God], therefore, belongs to a distinct category of the spiritual world, though He is Spirit."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Unfortunately, it is his magnum opus by default. As his first major publication, his early death stole away the potential for a greater work ripened with maturity, built upon the efforts of *Pitfalls*.

⁶⁷ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, Page 4.

Based on God's creative work, Kato explains that the eternal God is the origin of all other spirits. God is the uncreated Spirit who is the source and sustainer of all created spirits.⁶⁹ Again returning to Scripture as the authority, Kato quotes Psalm 148:2, 5 and Colossians 1:16 to evidence this point. God is responsible for the existence of all things: seen and unseen. Spirits are therefore categorically included. But Kato admits that the Scriptures do not demarcate the exact time when God produced the unseen spirits.

Created spirits are not replications of God. Rather, spirits do not have the same unlimited qualities that God enjoys. According to Kato, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence are beyond the realm of the created, though unseen spirits do possess superior knowledge, power, and ability.

Taking up the traditional perspective concerning the angelic realm, Kato unveils the initial perfection and purity of the spirits – the angels. He says, "Since God created the spirits, every spirit must have been very good. This includes demons and even Satan himself."⁷⁰ Yet, much like humanity, the spirits were not destined for perpetual flawlessness. One spirit being, Lucifer (i.e. Satan), mounted a foolish revolt, with others in his wake. Sin entered the created realm, and Kato points the finger, "Satan's pride and ambition were the root cause of sin."⁷¹ The wicked spirits were "expelled from the presence of God" as unholy, being labeled as unclean spirits and demons.⁷² Some are bound, but many are free for a time until judgment.

After a look at various biblical categories for holy angels (seraphim, cherubim, Gabriel, and Michael), the activity of these elect beings is synthesized from the biblical material. Good spirits are occupied with "The worship of God," "The working out of God's will," "Looking

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, Page 6.

⁷¹ Ibid, Page 8.

⁷² Ibid.

after God's Chosen People Israel," "Serving Jesus Christ," and "Helping Christians."⁷³ Thus, Kato has now presumably provided the means by which the reader may know what to expect from a proper angel or spirit.

Then Kato sees fit to discuss evil spirits (demons), beginning with their leader, Satan. Only twelve of Satan's names/titles are listed and explained, with some noteworthy exclusions (e.g. Apollyon/Abaddon). However, Satan, as a finite being with limited power and influence, exerts his control through his agents - mephistophelean spirits who obey his will.⁷⁴ Dismissing speculative positions concerning the origin of these wicked associates, Kato roots their history in the fallen angels. Thus he asserts, "Man is not alone in the universe. There is a world of spirits, and they are fighting a severe battle day and night."⁷⁵ But what are their primary activities? How can they be recognized?

Kato sketches six undertakings of the demonic realm, in its foolish and vindictive attempt to "harm God's plan."⁷⁶ First, God judges and tests His children, by permitting the ongoing work of Satan's minions against them. Kato uses Job as an example of how spirits can test us. Second, demons cause physical pain and persecution. Thankfully, Kato reminds us that despite this awesome power they cannot remove us from God's love. Third, evil spirits "oppose the good angels of God in their work."⁷⁷ Fourth, they assist Satan with his vile schemes, including deceptions, temptations, impersonation, and violence. Fifth, demons disseminate false philosophies and corrupt doctrine. This manifests in a number of ways. On one end of the spectrum, people are taught to deny Satan's reality. On the other end, humans are occasionally encouraged to worship Satan directly. Kato highlights that spiritualistic false teaching continues

⁷³ Ibid, Pages 10-16.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Page 17.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Page 18.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Pages 18-21.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Page 19.

to influence Africa. After citing examples of witchcraft, Kato says, “A great deal of public life in Africa is connected with the spirits. That is what Satan and his demons want.”⁷⁸ Sixth, evil spirits have no body, and they exploit physical residencies (human or animal) through which they can interact with the world.

How much power do demonically influenced practitioners truly have? Kato wants to temper our tendency to “believe everything we hear.”⁷⁹ Some people are simply liars and charlatans, which concords with Satan’s work as being “the father of lies.” Yet, Kato also challenges the Western attitude which refuses to acknowledge the supernatural power of the spirits. After a handful of contemporary illustrations, Kato states, “Satan can perform miracles” and then relays the biblical narrative concerning Pharaoh’s magicians who turned their staffs into serpents.⁸⁰ The caution to the optimistic reader is this: “Unusual things may happen, but that does not necessarily make them the acts of God.”⁸¹ Counter-culturally, Kato even argues that this means “It is possible for evil spirits to put on the appearance of a dead person and come back to communicate with living people.”⁸²

Christians must be equipped to respond to the activity of demonic world. Kato argues that Christians should “believe in the reality” of the spirit realm and its works, even as we avoid contact with those demonic powers.⁸³ Fortune tellers, traditional religious practitioners, and their ilk are out of bounds for followers of Jesus according to Kato, since “evil spirits are behind the

⁷⁸ Ibid, Page 20.

⁷⁹ Ibid, Page 21.

⁸⁰ Ibid, Page 22.

⁸¹ Ibid, Page 23.

⁸² Ibid, Page 22.

⁸³ Ibid, Page 23.

activities of witches and diviners.”⁸⁴ In contrast, God’s people should deny curiosity, choosing to be set apart.

This line of thought leads Kato to the foremost African question: How should we relate to dead ancestors? Kato acknowledges that the deceased are customarily included in the lives of those who still live. Veneration and communication are norms. Yet Kato warns that this is necromancy, prohibited by the Scriptures.⁸⁵ In addition to Paul’s scorching rebuke in Acts 13:10, Isaiah 8:19 is Kato’s primary text.⁸⁶ So Kato ultimately concludes, “The answer to worries is not found in dealing with dead people but in Jesus Christ.” Necromancy cannot offer what Jesus can.⁸⁷

Rather, Kato implores Christians to “actively resist Satan” and “be alert all the time,” while trusting in God’s protection.⁸⁸ Encouraging believers to rely on God’s spiritual provisions through the armor of God in Ephesians 6, victory can be won when we are standing with the Lord, resisting the enemy, and fleeing temptation. Kato also attempts to dispel any fears about Christians being indwelt by a demon. Based upon the pneumatological doctrine of indwelling,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, Pages 25-26.

⁸⁶ “Isaiah’s followers need to be aware that some will reject what God has said through words and signs; instead, they may say that the only way to find out about the future is to consult the pagan spirit world.... The term ‘spiritists’ is ambiguous... It may refer to the ‘spirits’ themselves or to the person who contacts the spirits. The description of their communication as ‘whisper and mutter’ could be an accurate portrayal of the shadowy world of the spirits, but these negative descriptions also are meant to ridicule this pagan source of information.... Even today in our scientific age, some people who are turned off by traditional religious ritual are turning to psychics, eastern religions, witchcraft, and séances to learn about the future. To counteract these pagan practices Isaiah (a) asks two cryptic questions about the validity of these other worldly resources; (b) offers an alternative source of divine knowledge; and (c) provides a criterion people should use to judge the validity of any claims to supernatural knowledge. The two questions ask: Should people not ‘inquire’... of their own God? Why would anyone want to talk to a dead person’s spirit about the living? It is illogical for God’s covenant people... to seek advice from anyone other than their own covenant God. He knows them, loves them, protects them, and guides them, so why would they go elsewhere? It also does not make much sense to go to the dead to find out about the living. The spirit of a dead person does not become a divine being with supernatural knowledge about the future.” (Smith, Gary V. *Isaiah 1-39*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁸⁷ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 27.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Page 28.

he argues that the Holy Spirit's presence preempts Christians from being possessed, though demonic forces can influence the believer.⁸⁹ Of course, those who follow Jesus Christ can also count upon the ministering defense of the holy angels, but "any superstitious worship of angels is against the teaching of God's Word."⁹⁰

Kato culminates his teaching concerning the spirits with a resounding emphasis on the Word of God. The challenge is clear: "The written Word of God should be the final test of any action. Even if an educated man, though he is a Christian leader, says something that does not agree with the Bible, do not believe him."⁹¹ Because of the widespread confusion on this subject, Kato insists that believers must examine the teachings with which teachers interact. After a long list of suggested questions, Kato says:

*Does [the teaching in question] recognize that the wicked may even prosper in this life through their dealings with evil spirits but the day is coming when Jesus Christ will put down all principalities and powers, and become Lord of Lords and King of Kings? Only the teaching that answers these questions positively is in line with Scripture. If you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone to be saved from your sins, be assured that you are now a child of God and that you do not need to fear evil spirits or seek any help from them through magic or charms.*⁹²

Then after a final Scripture citation (2 Timothy 1:12), Kato ends his pastoral plea and the book itself. Moving on from *The Spirits*, let us observe the topic of the demonic within Kato's most substantial composition, *Pitfalls*.

⁸⁹ Ibid, Page 29.

⁹⁰ Ibid, Page 30.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, Page 31. Clarification supplied.

2.2.2 Theological Pitfalls in Africa

Kato's greatest and most polarizing theological offering weighs in with thirteen chapters. Before we analyze the treatment of demons in *Pitfalls*, contextual recognition is necessary. His argumentation did not rise in a vacuum; Kato was responding to the increasing efforts of ecumenism which were leading to universalism and syncretism. With that in mind, we can better swallow the candor and urgency of his composition. Kato fashioned his content and delivery.

Paul Bowers' review of *Pitfalls* rightly mediates our desire to overreact to Kato.

It must be said at once that Kato is by no means opposed to a legitimate contextualization of the Christian message in Africa; to the contrary, he says that an indigenous theology is a necessity. To fail to recognize that this is fundamental to his theological perspective – as some have – is to fail to understand Kato. I well remember Dr. Kato igniting a large evangelical congress in Nigeria at the conclusion of a notable address with the ringing appeal: “Let African Christians be Christian Africans.” He wanted a Christianity that was, as he put it, “truly African and truly biblical.”⁹³

Of course, *Pitfalls* does not completely represent that full-orbed perspective toward the theologizing in Africa. Kato's first book narrowly and vigorously focused on ensuring that African Christianity was “truly biblical.” Bowers continues:

Pitfalls should not be taken as Kato's intended paradigm for the theological task awaiting African evangelicalism. While Kato urged upon African evangelicals the importance of developing a positive African Christian theology, his one published book goes very little beyond a negative critique of certain pitfalls menacing such a venture. Kato doubtless would have argued, with reason, that this was an essential preliminary step, a ground-clearing exercise in preparation for the positive task. But he certainly saw the task as much more than merely

⁹³ Bowers, Paul. “Review of Theological Pitfalls in Africa” *Themelios* 5.3 (May 1980), Pages 33-34.

*polemics. And that he would himself have attempted to follow on with a positive contribution entirely fits the direction of his intellectual interests and inclinations at the time of his death. For balance assessment, Pitfalls must be viewed within this wider context of Kato's vision for a positive evangelical theological initiative in Africa.*⁹⁴

In Kato's well-intentioned attempt to unveil dangers, this book generated enemies, and with Kato's passing, he could not defend or clarify it. Bowers remarks:

*It should come as no surprise that Pitfalls was not received everywhere with enthusiasm.... Some reaction was vicious.... One theologian reputedly threatened legal action over certain passages in the book.... When emotive reactions to Pitfalls have receded, valid criticisms will certainly remain. But it would be a misfortune if mere criticism were all that remained.*⁹⁵

Therefore, even as we encounter difficult portions of Kato's work in our study, may these points of context leave us with an open mind, eager to cogitate Kato's thoughts within his broader theological framework.

As we embark on our journey through *Pitfalls* to harvest Kato's perspective on the demonic host, our initial stop is Kato's discussion concerning the spirit world, through the cultural lens of the Jaba people. Kato says, "Jaba believe that the whole world is full of spirits. The only good spirit is that which comes back to be born again. So the life of a Jaba person is dominated by fear. In fact the same word 'hyong' (spirit) is used for fear."⁹⁶ But the Jaba not only dread spirits, but sometimes they "benefit" from them. Within their society, a regular and accepted form of contact between the spirits and living humanity is by female possession. Kato records, "When a lady is possessed, she speaks in tongues, prophesies, and performs miracles.... Women possessed with evil spirits pour fire on their bodies without being burned, jump over

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 36.

high walls, fall down from roofs about 15 high, and other such feats.”⁹⁷ Restraining these women is problematic due to their unusual strength. However, exorcism rites, invoked by medicine men, are a common response to this phenomenon, in an attempt to release women from harm and bondage.

Lest we think that these spirits are appropriate, Kato explains, “The spirits are always associated with ‘Kuno,’ Satan. Jaba have never doubted the existence or activities of Satan. He is a real person to them.”⁹⁸ But what should the Jaba do? Kato answers, “The dominating fears and superstitions concerning the spirit world are so dreadful that an instantaneous and complete cure is what Jaba people need.” The religious beliefs of the Jaba are unable to supply that cure, and that is why Kato states:

*... Jaba religion is a recognition of the craving after the Supreme Being, a search for reality in life, but at the same time a flight from God the Creator and Redeemer. The beliefs of African traditional religions only locate the problem; the practices point away from the solution; the Incarnate risen Christ alone is the answer. Christianity is a radical faith and it must transform sinners radically.*⁹⁹

Traditional religion does illuminate need, but one’s relationship to the spirit realm should necessarily be transformed by the biblical worldview, especially when those spirits are agents of terror and fear.

Satan enters Kato’s text again as Kato derides John Mbiti’s apparent vestiges of universalism. After quoting Mbiti at length, Kato scathingly responds, “Mbiti’s universalism comes out in its essence here. All men, Christians and non-Christians alike will be saved. He is just one step short of Origen who taught that even Satan will be saved in the final analysis.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ibid, Pages 36-37.

⁹⁸ Ibid, Page 37.

⁹⁹ Ibid, Page 38.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Page 87.

While playing a minor role, Kato's mention of Origen's view of the devil's idyllic "demise" does treat the subject of Satan as a historical norm in theological circles. But this fleeting mention serves more to prompt questions about Kato's attacks on Mbiti than to instill any meaningful thoughts concerning Satan.¹⁰¹

One common thought is that African traditional religion has worshipped the same Supreme Being as the Christian God, though veiled. Kato rejects this, turning to the example of Acts 17:

*Paul was not praising the Athenians for worshipping the true God unawares. Rather, he was saying that the yearning of their heart for some kind of Reality not clear to them was the natural cry of the human heart after the Creator. But their distorted mind had landed them in gross idolatry.*¹⁰²

According to Kato's argument, this "distortion" is what has led to idolatry and false worship among the Africans as well. God has not accurately revealed the divine nature through the traditional religions, and Christians cannot accept the idolatry of their fathers. Kato insists:

[The biblical and early Christians] did not see the gods as agents of God but rather the work of the devil. God's revelation is not found in idolatry but in nature. This natural revelation has been distorted and the conception of gods, be they zeus, hermes, or orishos, is a distortion rather than the worship of God. The theology of "Implicit Monotheism" as hitherto evaluated is foreign to biblical Christianity. African traditional religious worshippers may claim that their gods

¹⁰¹ Even though Kato respected Mbiti, Kato saw him as a source of syncretism and universalism. Rumors spread after Kato's death that he had privately withdrawn his criticisms of Mbiti. However, these claims appear to be false. Dr. Charles Kraft of Fuller Theological Seminary relayed to Paul Bowers the following details: "Kato, following the publication of *Pitfalls* and just before his untimely death, requested a meeting with Mbiti. During the course of a friendly discussion, and in response to objections from Mbiti, Kato apologized for the wording of particular passages in *Pitfalls*, and undertook to make adjustments accordingly in two paragraphs in the book in future printings. It was a worthy gesture, and worth reporting. It is equally worthwhile to note the inexcusable distortion of the subsequent printed accounts, which converted a modification of tone into a full-scale retraction of substance. Kato made no deathbed recantations!" (Bowers, Paul. "Review of Theological Pitfalls in Africa" *Themelios* 5.3 (May 1980), Pages 33-34.)

¹⁰² Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 121.

*are agents of the triune God, Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. But their view must be subjected under the searchlight of the Word of God. Under that scrutiny, the traditional religions are found wanting.*¹⁰³

Kato is indicating that African religions do not adequately represent the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ. Every distortion and the resulting lower deities are a deceptive work of the enemy, the devil. Thus, the African Christian cannot claim Jesus and still pursue what is a lie. So Kato says, “The challenge of Elijah confronts Christian leadership in Africa today: ‘How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God follow Him, but if Baal, follow Him’ (1 Kings 17:21).”¹⁰⁴

The idea of the evil one’s control over Africa is resurrected by Kato a bit later. He states, “There was no confusion as to the fact that without the Gospel of Christ, Africa was in ‘darkness of pagan rituals.’ This was no abuse of African culture, but an honest admission of the undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ which sees that ‘the whole world lies in the power of the evil one’ (1 John 5:19).”¹⁰⁵ By bringing in this point which was affirmed by African Christians (that Africa had been in darkness due to pagan rituals), Kato steps forward upon that knowledge and implies that the pre-Christian darkness was imposed by none other than Satan himself, who opposes and obscures God’s light in every culture and continent.

This theme of devilish influence in Africa continues throughout *Pitfalls*. By comparing the current African religious situation to the Greco-Roman situation of the second century, he asserts that African Christians are facing a similar plight to their Christian forefathers. The currents of the time are resuscitating the religiosity of the past, and Christians are being pressed

¹⁰³ Ibid, Page 122. Clarification added.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, Page 126.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, Page 150. Kato is interacting with *Drumbeats from Kampala* (published 1963) which chronicles the assembly of the All African Conference of Churches.

to accept traditional practices. While persecution is a potential result, Kato points to other possibilities.

But the devil has many other avenues for fighting against Christ and His church and he knows where best to succeed. Christo-paganism appears to be the area of attack within the next generation. The battle has started. The unique claims of Christ are regarded as eccentricities. The relativity philosophy is seeking to make the Scriptures only one of many revelations rather than a special revelation.... [Christian Scripture] cannot dislodge other revelation but only improve on them. That being the case, salvation is no monopoly of Christianity.¹⁰⁶

The prevailing philosophies of the day and the introduction of inclusiveness are unwaveringly painted as the villain, strategically motivated and employed by the devil. Being wise in his attacks against Christianity, Satan is undermining the exclusivity of the Scriptures and the claims of Christ Himself.

Instead, the African Christian, planted upon the special revelation of the Scriptures, should recall:

... The twentieth century convert is not the first Christian to burn up the bridges linking with his past life of idol worship. The first converts in Ephesus went to the point of literally burning their books of magic arts for the sake of Christ, thus breaking with their culture (Acts 19:18-20). Not all the so-called African culture is de facto culture. So much in the guise of culture is actually idolatry. It is extremely difficult to differentiate religion from culture; nevertheless, a careful discernment is imperative.¹⁰⁷

Using England's Stonehenge as an example, Kato labels it as an ancient shrine of Druidism. But despite Christianity's growth in England, it was retained for "cultural reasons." Then Kato says, "In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a veneration of the shrine was revived. Today, spirit

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Pages 173-174. Clarification added.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Page 174.

worshippers from the United States spend thousands of dollars on pilgrimages to the pagan shrine in England.” And Africa can learn from England’s mistake, for Kato reasons,

*Applying the same analogy to the African situation, is it worth preserving the “juju” if the converted Christian will be tempted to go back to “Egypt” or “the house of Laban?” Where lies the unique claim of Christ which is supposed to supersede even kin relationships (Matthew 12:46-50)? Should national pride or cultural heritage come before Christ? New Testament Christianity has a strong negative answer to that.*¹⁰⁸

As English Christians should reject the idolatry of their past, the African Christian should turn from spiritism (and Kato mentions the acutely personal subject of juju), sifting false religion from culture.

As Kato moves toward a conclusion to his extensive work, he submits ten ways to “safeguard biblical Christianity in Africa.”¹⁰⁹ His second point contains the relevant information concerning our study on the demonic spirits. Kato challenges us, saying, “Express Christianity in a truly African context, allowing it to judge the African culture and never allow the culture to take precedence over Christianity.”¹¹⁰ And in developing that African Christian theology, Kato suggests, “‘Scratch where it itches.’ The African problems of polygamy, family structure, spirit world, liturgy, to mention a few, need to be tackled by evangelical African theologians and biblical answers presented.”¹¹¹ Presumably, his booklet on the spirits provides a sample of exactly what he means by this instruction.

Demonology and pneumatatology do not feature in *Pitfalls*, but the few references do unearth resounding emphases, which we will analyze later. In the meantime, let us turn to Kato’s remaining writings for other demonological insights.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Page 175.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, Page 181.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Page 182.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

2.2.3 His Other Writings

Presented with a wealth of smaller documents from Byang Kato, we will recapitulate a number of statements concerning the demonic and the spirits.¹¹² However, since we have already undertaken a sketch of Kato's life which articulated his spiritual background, we will minimize materials wherein Kato recounts those same biographical details.

(1) Kato discusses the role of evil spirits among the Jaba people, in *A Critique of Incipient Universalism in Tropical Africa: A Study of the Religious Concepts of the "Jaba" People of West Africa*. In the midst of undermining their concept of sin and their way of understanding salvation (which amounts to social acceptance), a form of sacrifice for spiritual deliverance is mentioned.

*Blood sacrifice is used at different occasions. It is usually for deliverance from the power of the evil spirits. If a woman is troubled by evil spirits, she is told the type of rooster to offer for sacrifice, whether red or white. When the rooster is ceremoniously killed, the blood is applied on each side and on top of the door post. The feather is dipped in the blood and thus applied. The patient is then expected to be cured. Besides this, no other thought of the meritorious use of the blood is known.*¹¹³

Yes, Kato is attempting to adequately represent his cultures' worldview, but at the same time, Kato casts no doubt concerning the reality of evil spirits or the apotropaic remedies of his people. Furthermore, he distinguishes this rite for responding to evil spirits from the rite for appeasing the ancestors (which is mentioned right after the blood ritual). But all of these practices are painted as "ordeals," for Kato declares, "These pessimistic and ceaseless ordeals make a Jaba

¹¹² As the time of authorship can be difficult to determine for some of Kato's writings, we will not be proceeding chronologically. While such diachronic studies can occasionally be helpful to display the formulation and maturation of theological thought, Byang Kato's theological career was short, being curtailed by death, and therefore his efforts will be presented as a whole.

¹¹³ Kato, Byang. "A Critique of Incipient Universalism in Tropical Africa: A Study of the Religious Concepts of the 'Jaba' People of West Africa," *The International Journal of Theology and Philosophy in Africa*. 1:1 (1989), Pages 55-84.

person, such as the author, appreciate the assurance of rest and finality found in the Lamb of God...”¹¹⁴

(2) Kato, in an article entitled *Africa: Prudence and Promise*, details the persecution of Chadian Christians.¹¹⁵ He provides a perspective on the devil that is more descriptive than didactic, but he says:

*The president of Chad is saying that every Chadian should go through the ceremony of initiation. This includes circumcision, and circumcision is not necessarily bad, but it also means going back to paying respect to the gods of the ancestors.... And so Christians in Chad have indicated that they are willing to be loyal to the government authority but as far as much of the initiation is concerned they have declared it is from the devil. They do not feel that they can worship God and the devil at the same time, and so have refused to do so and many of them have been killed.*¹¹⁶

This is no theological treatise, but it certainly does reveal that Kato at least accepts this narrative as veracious, with a close correlation between ancestral gods and the devil.

(3) Via a typescript *Africa under the Cross*, Byang Kato again mentions Satan’s influence in modern society. Lamenting the divisions and hostilities that consume humanity, Kato indicts the human heart for the corrosive world we inhabit, but he also mentions Satan’s despotic rule.

Every individual is a sinner and since individuals make up human structures, those structures are also corrupt. Human effort may and should help improve the society. But the prince of this world Satan is the ruler of this world system. The system awaits God’s final judgement. The believers being saved out of this world system, are called out of darkness into His marvelous light. The called out ones,

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ He tells about the deliverance of the Christians in *Promising Future for the Church in Chad*, after a successful coup by the military. (Kato, Byang. "Promising Future for the Church in Chad" [Typescript: May 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.)

¹¹⁶ Kato, Byang. "Africa: Prudence and Promise," *United Evangelical Action*, 34.2 (1975), Pages 17-20, 34.

*whether they are Jews or Greeks, Americans or Pakistanis, Hungarians, or Russians, white South Africans or black Zimbabweans – all one in Christ Jesus.*¹¹⁷

Human nature and the resulting corruption bears the brunt of Kato's accusation, but the prevailing symphony (or to Christians - a cacophony) of evil is ultimately superintended and systematized by Satan. In the cosmic sense, the devil receives the credit for hostility, and Christ achieves the glory of unity through the church, even in the midst of severe structural and personal perniciousness. Despite the ingrained evils of the age, Christ can redeem and unite from every people group. But Kato's concern is that Christian doctrine is being misused to teach a unity which includes those who are not in Christ, but under the world system of the devil. According to Kato, true unity is only in the church.

(4) Satan and spirit worship also arise in Kato's work *African Cultural Revolution and the Christian Faith*. Couching his discussion on the goodness of culture, Kato reminds us, "Culture, in its original setting, was God-given. At the original creation God gave man a particular life-style."¹¹⁸ Yet, Kato, being faithful to the recognition and condemnation of sin, strictly states that after the fall, "Idolatry and immorality have characterized every culture.... It shows man's thirst for God, and at the same time his rebellion against God."¹¹⁹ And Kato refrains from criticizing Africa alone.

The revival of witchcraft and spirit worship in North America and Europe today is a clear indication of depravity in every culture.... Every culture, be it European, Asian, or African is corrupt. There are people who have surrendered themselves completely to the service of Satan in every culture.... It is the Word of

¹¹⁷ Kato, Byang. "Africa under the Cross" [1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Voice of Kenya at Nairobi Baptist Church, November 16, 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

¹¹⁸ Kato, Byang. *African Cultural Revolution and the Christian Faith*, Page 26.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, Page 27.

*God that must be used as a surgical knife on every culture. It has purged England of Druidic practices. So should it purge Africa of animistic practices.*¹²⁰

Animism, witchcraft, and spirit worship are all lumped into Satan's dominion. Kato uniformly calls for the reformation of every culture under the leadership of the Word of God, divorced from demonic contributions and corruptions.

(5) Warning against the escalating influence of "Christo-paganism" on the continent of Africa, Kato delves further into the strategy of Satan in *Africa's Battle for Biblical Christianity*. In his opening paragraph, he says, "But when the church shines brightest, the devil attacks the fiercest. He works both quietly and violently depending on which approach is most likely to succeed. Today he is trying both methods in Africa."¹²¹ Kato's ire is directed toward theological fronts, wherein he paints biblical Christianity in Africa as at war with liberal and pagan forces which seek to be amalgamated into the Christian community. This battle is folded into the introductory concept of Satan's assaults on orthodox Christianity.

(6) Although demons, spirits, and Satan are not directly cited, it behooves us to momentarily consider a printed interview (*Africa's Christian Future*) where Kato mentioned culture and the ancestors. Kato articulated:

I am thankful for being an African, and there are certain cultural elements that are compatible with a biblical outlook and can and should be retained. But some are not. Some of these so-called cultural things amount to denying the faith we hold so dear.... I heard an interesting story recently of a Christian leader in Zaire at a formal occasion where drinks were being poured on the ground out of respect for ancestors. But this Christian leader, instead of pouring his drink on the ground, lifted it up and thanked God in prayer. They told him he was not being an authentic Zairean. He told them he was a Zairean but not an ancestor

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Kato, Byang. "Africa's Battle for Biblical Christianity," *Moody Monthly*, (November 1974), Pages 53-56.

*worshipper. Rather, he said, he was a Christian whose practice was to give thanks. I thought that was beautiful.*¹²²

The reason why we must mention this text is because Kato's negative relationship with the ancestors is vibrantly displayed. Rituals that honor and respect ancestors are summarily associated with false worship. Furthermore, Kato espouses that a Christian leader's counter-cultural act has a laudable excellence.

(7) Kato wrote in opposition to Black Theology in one article (*An Evaluation of Black Theology*), arguing that its reactionary, situational, humanistic, and racial undertones erode its proper aim of opposing injustice. Specifically, Kato disagrees with Moore's idolatrous depiction of God, wherein Moore diminishes God's omnipotent kingship, labeling it as an image of white authoritarianism. Kato accuses:

Satan's attempt to usurp God's throne ended in utter failure. Throughout the ages he has also energized man to try to dethrone God. The popular notion of a God-is-dead theology has been a part of that attempt to demythologize Christian theological language, reducing God to the realm of a created being. This form of idolatry, or rather atheism, is infiltrating the realm of black theology. The fact that a racist regime has abused power is no reason for man to deprive God, his Creator, of His rightful kingship.

Kato's Satanology is again shown to have overt theological applications. As Satan once rebelled, he continues to affect revolts against God's authority in the anthropological realm.

Moore's liberation theology is evidently bent to assist Satan's ends.¹²³

¹²² Kato, Byang. "Africa's Christian Future: Part II," *Christianity Today*, XX.1 (1975), Pages 12-16.

¹²³ In a related work, Kato still objects to black theology as reactionary, and he says, "Turning now to the reactionary theologians, we must not judge Christianity on the basis of the way in which it has been abused. It is true that even the devil can quote the Bible. Yet to get the accurate position of God's Word, it is a better approach to let the Bible speak within its total context. The wrong use of the Bible to justify man's selfishness should not be the basis of our test of Christianity. Nor should that be the basis of our theology. Black Theology as a reactionary theology should not be the answer to the black man's predicament. Rather, the black man should give the positive teaching of the Bible and see what it has to say on the issues on which the white man has gone wrong. Biblical theology expressing itself in such a

(8) In *The Church in the Closing Years of the Twentieth Century*, Byang Kato exhibits a bit of optimism before acknowledging the dangers ahead. He remarks:

*It seems evident that the church is on the verge of becoming a dynamic force universally. As the early church was to the Roman Empire so the church is coming to be to the whole world. Christianity turned the world upside down. But pagan authorities attempted to turn the church inside out. As the Christian church gets rooted in various cultures of the world, pulling down the kingdom of Satan, the enemy of souls, [sic] will react.*¹²⁴

Almost prophetically, Kato foresees Satanic resistance to the globalization of Christianity. Why? The gospel's growth interferes with the influence of the evil one in cultures around the world. What are some challenges that Kato believes are around the corner? The abuse of contextualization, the false unity of ecumenism, and the rise of interreligious dialogue (in the place of biblical proclamation) are all predicted to burgeon as the Christian church settles into its new global role which threatens Satan's dominion.

(9) At a debate which covered the issue of ecumenism, Dr. Kato spoke bluntly on the subject of unity, as recorded in *Ecumenicals – Evangelicals Debate in Germany*. Resisting the idea that Christians and non-Christians should be unified beyond being "together in social issues, struggling together for the development of a given community," Kato advocates that the Christians should "be aware of the primary task of the church here and now, which is to prepare each believer as well as other people for the eternal kingdom to come (Mt. 6:33). He does this by inviting people to accept Christ as their Saviour and live for Him as the salt of the earth."¹²⁵ Some unity can be reached, "but where there is a clearly unbiblical position held by some

way that it speaks to every ethnic group with the same message is the proper approach." (Kato, Byang. "Black Theology" [Typescript] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.)

¹²⁴ Kato, Byang. "The Church in the Closing Years of the Twentieth Century," *World Vision Magazine*, (December 1974), n. pag. Clarification added.

¹²⁵ Kato, Byang. "Ecumenicals - Evangelicals Debate in Germany," *Perception* 2.1 (1975), Pages 1-8.

group... true unity is not possible. Such a unity would be that of a pig and a cat with their legs tied together and pushed into a miry pond.”¹²⁶ Then Kato was asked, “Does the proposed world unity not amount to the work of Anti-Christ?”¹²⁷ His unambiguous reply is as follows:

*The concept of world unity which includes both the saved and the [unsaved] is not of Christ. The Bible says, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Cor. 6:14-15). If such a unity is not from Christ, it must be from the enemy of Christ.*¹²⁸

False unity, especially through the propagation of teachings which diminish the need for Christian salvation, is labeled as from “the enemy of Christ.” While Kato may not be directly referring to Satan by the phrase “the enemy of Christ” (though that seems likely), it is certain that he agrees with the sentiment of 2 Corinthians 6, which presents those without Christ as darkened and faithless, under the dominion of Belial (the worthless one) - Satan.¹²⁹ However, Kato has other theologies in mind (including Liberation Theology), when he later says, “In the face of this, evangelical Christians must oppose the devil and he will flee.”¹³⁰

(10) Kato again bemoans the theological troubles of Africa in *Evangelical Structures That Should Affect the Church*. With the “growing tendency towards universalism and syncretism,” Kato comments:

The highly commendable desire for contextualization today is proving to become a tool in the hands of the devil. It is only right that the African should be made to

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Clarification supplied.

¹²⁹ The word Belial has a complex background. But it eventually was associated with the devil, and that is probably the best understanding of Paul’s usage in 2 Corinthians 6. (Sperling, S.D. “Belial,” *DDD*, Pages 169-171.)

¹³⁰ Kato, Byang. “Ecumenicals - Evangelicals Debate in Germany,” *Perception* 2.1 (1975), Pages 1-8.

understand that he can be an African Christian.... That part of African culture that does not contradict biblical teaching should be employed for the furtherance of the gospel. But one frightening thing today is the type of socio-political garb which Christianity is made to wear.... Africa wants to show the world that [the] black man too has something to offer. We must therefore, come up with an African brand of Christianity, which of course, would accommodate "the faith of our fathers". The derogatory terms of paganism, heathenism, and animism must be replaced with the more respectable name of African Traditional Religion.¹³¹

Contextualization is valuable and appropriate, but Kato discerns dangers to biblical Christianity in the process. It becomes "of the devil" when it is wielded as an integrative instrument, slipping Africa pagan religion under the umbrella of Christianity. Syncretism is the aim of the enemy, and the abuse of contextualization and patriotism is blamed.

(11) Lecturing on *False Cults*, Kato admits that due to their large number an exhaustive study of all the cults in Africa would be a lengthy errand. But a list of eight is elucidated. The eighth point concerns "Spiritism." Having asserted that Scripture alone is the standard and that "we should 'try the spirits [to see] whether they are of God' in the light of God's Word," Kato points out spiritism's errors.¹³²

The basic teaching of the adherents of this cult is that they can communicate with the spirit world. They seek strongly to get in touch with the dead. But see Deut. 18:10, 12, 14; Isa. 8:19, 20. Erroneous teachings summed up:

Deny the personality of Christ.

Deny the fall of man.

Deny resurrection and man's eternal destiny.

¹³¹ Kato, Byang. "Evangelical Structures That Should Affect the Church Nationally and Internationally." [Typescript of Speech at EFMA/IFMA Retreat 1973] in Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: *Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD. Clarification added.

¹³² Kato, Byang. "False Cults" [The Christian Leaders Conference Ilorin, Nigeria, May 9-16, 1969] in Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: *Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD. Clarification added.

*Seek to abandon Christian ordinances and worship.*¹³³

And why do people fall for cults like spiritism? Kato's list of reasons includes, "Satan uses the cults for his purpose."¹³⁴ A slew of remedies are prescribed, but one directly pertains. "Be alert. We are in the last days. 1 Peter 5:8."¹³⁵ Satan's overarching relationship with spiritism is communicated, but the text does not elaborate on the issue of the spirits. It seems to imply that spiritists are aiming to communicate with dead humans in the spirit world, and the illicitness of that necromancy is exposed through quoting Deuteronomy and Isaiah.

(12) Responding to the theological notion that biblical salvation includes political liberation, Byang Kato opposes the misuse of the exodus narrative as a so-called prototype of modern Christian freedom from political tyranny. The New Testament is his primary source and hermeneutic in *Jesus Christ Frees*, and Kato says:

*Although the early church grew up in an unquestionably imperialistic and oppressive system, the New Testament does not interpret the exodus event as an encouragement to political liberation. It is understood as a type of the spiritual salvation Christ has brought for sinners.*¹³⁶

What spiritual salvation does the New Testament depict, in fulfillment and in concert with the Old Testament concept? Kato's first of six answers is, "Christians are redeemed from spiritual bondage under the elemental spirits of the universe as Israel was redeemed out of Egypt and later from Babylon."¹³⁷ The accompanying footnote in the document cites Galatians 4:3.¹³⁸

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid. First Peter 5:8 is a verse about being wary of Satan. "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (NASB) "... 'devil' is minus the article [in Greek] because it is regarded as a proper noun. This is mere point of grammar that does not affect the sense. 'As' is not 'like' although 'a lion roaring' is figurative; the devil *is* such a lion." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*, Page 225. Clarification added.)

¹³⁶ Kato, Byang, and G. B. Osei-mensah. "Jesus Christ Frees: Nairobi Baptist Church," *Themelios* 1.3 (1976), Pages 65-75.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Evidently, Kato is espousing a position concerning the world order which incorporates demonic rulership and oppression over non-Christians, but no additional details are revealed.

(13) A number of relevant references surface in Kato's work *Loyalty*. With the political turmoil in Africa as the backdrop, Kato emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ. About Christ's return, Kato writes:

*He would come back without failure. He had no need to fear any physical disaster such as heavy storms or earthquake, for He had proved Himself the [C]reator, and Master of the whole creation. He had rebuked the raging storm and there was perfect peace on the ocean. Spiritual forces had to obey Him. It is true that there would be some rebels who would plan a coup after his departure, but He would take care of the situation upon His return.*¹³⁹

After the self-explanatory mention of "spiritual forces," Kato continues discussing Jesus' reign, and His expectations and responsibilities for us in His absence. Drawing from his sermon text (Luke 19:11-27) Kato states, "... He wanted to make sure that his servants were not left idle. An empty head is the devil's workshop."¹⁴⁰ Since this passing statement about the devil has a proverbial quality, it is not suitable for informing us about his demonology. However, Satan is again raised in a more overt manner. Commenting on prevailing trends of social unrest and rebellion, Kato articulates:

¹³⁸ "So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world." (NASB.) Clinton Arnold reports, "...The passage is best explained if one interprets the *stoicheia* as demonic powers, equivalent to the expression 'principalities and powers' in Paul's thought.... The contextual evidence points strongly in favor of the view that the *stoicheia* are angelic beings. In Gal. 4:8, Paul compares the *stoicheia* with beings that the pagans regard as god. In denying that these beings are gods, Paul is not denying that they have a real existence, only their claim to be gods. Paul expressed a similar idea to the Corinthians..." (Arnold, Clinton. "Returning to the Domain of the Powers: Stoicheia as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3,9." *Novum Testamentum* 38.1, 1996, Pages 57, 60.)

¹³⁹ Kato, Byang. "Loyalty" [Typescript of Message on Luke 19:11-27] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD. Clarification supplied.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

*Satan declared a rebellion against his [C]reator. Despite all the privileges God had given him, he deliberately chose to throw off God's rule over him. He wanted independence. The sin of rebellion has permeated the whole universe. Following Satan's deceit, man has been walking in that path.... Having come from a country, Nigeria, where there have been massacres, rebellions and a terrible civil war which claimed nearly a million lives besides [the] destruction [of] property worth millions of shillings, I wish to warn you that rebellion brings about serious consequences. If this is so on the human level, it is certainly worse in the matter of our relationship with God.*¹⁴¹

Satan and humanity are co-rebels, choosing a path of violence and defiance against the good Creator. Kato is grieved by how this has culminated in a relational divide between humanity and God.

(14) Kato's thesis (*Limitations of Natural Revelation*) for his Master of Sacred Theology degree at Dallas Theological Seminary nearly skirts around the entire issue of spirits, demons, and Satan. Kato labors in exalting the Word of God as critical for grasping certain doctrines. During his treatment of sin, one telling paragraph sheds insight upon his perspective concerning Satan. He transports us to the idyllic garden.

*The accounts of Genesis and the rest of the Scriptures make it plain that man did not continue in the state of purity and sweet communion with God. There came a moment when both Adam and Eve rebelled against God. They obeyed Satan and ate of the forbidden tree. That Satan came to Eve in the guise of a crawling reptile is a fact.... Regarding the argument that it is cruel on the part of God to condemn the whole human race of humanity on the basis of one act of sin committed by Eve and Adam[,] it should be remembered that it was an act of rebellion. [In] that one act man has taken up arms against God.*¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Clarification added.

¹⁴² Kato, Byang. *Limitations of Natural Revelation*. Dallas Theological Seminary (Master's Thesis, 1971), Page 63. Clarification supplied.

Kato has no tolerance for figurative “sophistry,” to use his term.¹⁴³ The garden narrative actually occurred, and assuming a canonical argument concerning the work of Satan, the serpent was a masquerade to fool humanity’s original ancestors.¹⁴⁴ Satan is the instigator of rebellion, though humanity itself is responsible for its despicable rebellion. Adam and Eve yielded to will of Satan instead of obeying the words of God.

(15) Byang Kato appreciated the contribution of foreign missionaries on the continent of Africa. That is how he himself heard the news about Jesus Christ! Yet, he had some significant concerns, and they are presented frankly in *The National Church: Do They Want Us?* He unapologetically writes:

*The national church is not interested in receiving a missionary who comes with a selfish motive. The sense of adventure, shelter from the complex life of the jet age and “the glory of the battlefield” may be some of the reasons for ruined mission stations which today stand as monuments to failure.... To go because of a mere sense of sympathy for the physical needs of the people is not a good enough reason. Such a person would do better to go under a philanthropic organization. Anything less than the spiritual motive is a tool in the devil’s hands.*¹⁴⁵

Kato is unequivocally displeased with missionaries who have self-serving motives and gospel-less ministry! He does not wish to disparage humanitarian efforts (as he elaborates in the paragraph which follows the quote), but a missionary is not a missionary unless consumed with the spiritual needs of the people. Anything less than this is branded as an instrument of Satan.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ It is odd that Kato implies a visual deception – a “guise” – instead of articulating that an actual serpent was demonically possessed or inhabited, manipulating the creature for reprehensible purposes.

¹⁴⁵ Kato, Byang. “The National Church: Do They Want Us?” *Christ the Liberator* (1971), Pages 163-170. Unabashedly promoting the centrality of the gospel, Kato continues, “Social work has already relegated the ministry of the pure gospel to the background in some missions work today. We should learn our lesson from the ‘social gospel’ venom seen in advanced countries. The gospel truly is for the whole man. But man’s greatest need is the salvation of his soul: ‘What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?’ (Mt. 16:26)”

As in, they are undermining the Christian work of evangelism (in concert with Satan) by their misplaced motives.

(16) Due to an interaction with an American minister, Kato took up the subject of tongues in *The Power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian*. He is skeptical of its modern expression, and in his analysis of Pentecost, he differentiates between the power of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of that power, of which tongues was only one of many.¹⁴⁶ So the manifestation of tongues is deemed non-essential for the work and power of the Spirit; it should not be expected or demanded. But Kato's conclusion also apprehensively deals with the source(s) of tongues.

*The widespread charismatic movement today may have both the genuine and counterfeit experiences. But the Word of God, and not the experience itself, should be the standard for judgment. Some tongue experiences could come from psychological feeling or even from the devil. But many sincere Christians have claimed the experience of tongues from the Lord and they have to be respected. But there is no scriptural warrant for pushing it on others.*¹⁴⁷

According to Kato, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues can be furnished by various sources. Human and divine causes are mentioned, but Kato even claims, without direct biblical basis, that the devil (or more precisely, evil spirits who work for Satan) can supply the oratory capacity for speaking in tongues. Presumably, this is an argument which is derived from Satan's goal of confusion and disorder.

(17) Seeking to expose the false teaching of Dr. Herbert Armstrong, an American "minister," Kato penned the article *The So-Called Ambassador of World Peace*. Acknowledging the apparent "success" of this man, Kato evaluates him by his doctrines rather than his achievements. Since Armstrong apparently undermined the reality of hell, Kato retorted, "The

¹⁴⁶ Kato, Byang. "The Power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian," *Today's Challenge* (September 1975): 6-7+.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Word of God certainly teaches that there is such a thing as hell fire (Matt. 18:9); a place for eternal punishment for Satan, demons, and all unbelievers (Rev. 20:14, 15).¹⁴⁸ Kato returns to the subject of Satan shortly thereafter, as Armstrong reportedly held to a form of *apocatastasis* (i.e. an eschatological restoration which leads to soteriological universalism) which involved the reinstatement of Satan's rule in the future. Kato says:

*...Armstrong explained that Satan has been dethroned but he does not know it. Then "Mr. Confusion" went on to state that Satan would someday be reinstated in his kingdom after the 1,000 years reign of God. Thus Armstrong falls into the heresy of universalism taught by Origen. According to this Egyptian theologian of the third century, every creature, including Satan, will someday be restored into everlasting happiness with God. However the Bible teaches that Satan is already judged, condemned, and hell is prepared for him.*¹⁴⁹

Kato escalates his rebuke of Armstrong.

*His magazine The Plain Truth and the correspondence course are going to follow the same line. They contain a lot of truth, even Bible truth, but misrepresentation of what the Bible really says will be hidden underneath. The readers will gradually be led away from the truth of God's Word as they are influenced by Armstrong's material. The Bible warns us that Satan himself could appear to us as an angel of light. Every heresy has both truth and errors mixed together, so watch out.*¹⁵⁰

In the initial pair of references, Kato is affirming the biblical statements concerning Satan and the demons' inevitable doom, in contrast to the inventions and musings of Armstrong. They are treated as real characters who will face a real punishment for their transgressions. But then Kato follows this with an allusion to 2 Corinthians 11:14. He warns his readers that Satan looks decent, and so Armstrong, a false teacher, also appears benign and benevolent. Kato's counsel

¹⁴⁸ Kato, Byang. "The So-Called Ambassador of World Peace," *Perception* 2.2 (1975), Pages 1-7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

resembles the same logic as the Apostle Paul's argument.¹⁵¹ In this brief remark, Kato affirms the stealth and deception of the enemy's activity, wherein Satan disguises himself as his holy angelic opponents.

(18) In his *Tips for Guests in Africa*, Kato attempts to "acquaint a new visitor to Africa with some African concepts and practices that would help him adjust more easily."¹⁵² After a geographical and historical survey, African religiosity is brought to the forefront. Then Kato instructs:

*The big struggle that the westerner has in conceiving the supernatural world is merely laughed at by the African.... The fact of God's existence needs no proof to the African. Satan and the whole host of spiritual beings are just as real as the local chief and his retinue are.*¹⁵³

Kato continues by addressing some of the misconceptions concerning African religion, for which he employs the term animism. He says:

Animism may be defined as that belief which holds that there are spiritual beings all around, some of whom inhabit physical objects such as trees, rivers and stones. Hence, the bowing down to "wood and stone" is seen as such only by the observer. The African does not see the object of his worship as merely a tree or a stone. He firmly believes that the object of his worship is not only possessed of

¹⁵¹ "Paul has referred to Satan's nefarious designs in 2:11 and 4:4. He now ties his opponents to the serpent who deceived Eve (11:3). Satan can pose as an angel of light. It should not be surprising then if satanic evil infiltrates a church and deludes it. The argument runs, if Satan disguises himself with the raiment of righteousness, then so will his minions. The rivals are no different from the master they serve.... The greatest weapon the devil has in his arsenal to test us is praise and flattery. The serpent offers the promise of special knowledge that will allow Adam and Eve to become like God. The Corinthians, who want to become rich and reign as kings (1 Cor 4:8), are particularly susceptible to a false gospel dispensed by jaunty, diamond-studded apostles that appeals to their innate human pride and desire to be special. Swollen with pride themselves, these rivals gull the Corinthians by stroking their vanity." (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

¹⁵² Kato, Byang. "Tips for Guests in Africa" [SIM Orientation Course, Nigeria] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

*the spirits, but it is the tangible aspect of the one universe since a dichotomy cannot be placed between the spiritual and physical.*¹⁵⁴

A word of caution to missionaries is also shared.

*One mistake some missionaries make is to try and see a perfect ante-type of church government they left behind in their own land. Anything other than that is of the Devil. It must be realized however, that people's mentality and maturity necessitate having different forms of church administration. After all, no organisational structure is [biblically] sanctified.*¹⁵⁵

The first quote seems to be framed in an implicit criticism of Western thought, which is firmly naturalistic and compartmentalized. In sharing this worldview tidbit concerning African thought, Kato is seemingly saying, "It is easier for an African to accept the plain truth of Scripture, due to the background of general revelation on the continent." Kato himself has no problem speaking about the spiritual world, and as he discusses African Traditional Religion in the second quote, no impression is supplied to undermine the reality of those beings. The last quote brings little to our theological conversation, since he is foisting words into the mouths of non-Africans who cannot handle a church situation which deviates from their tradition.

(19) Our final text is *The Youth in the African Church*. Kato proclaims the importance of young men and women to the future of Africa and African Christianity. Defining youth as between the ages of 13 to 24, Kato entreats:

*This period under review is a crucial one. It is a state from which a young person plunges into life for good or for bad. He decides for a life career. He chooses a life partner and begins a home where Christ or Satan reigns supreme. A lot depends on what the Church does in the earlier state.*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Clarification added.

¹⁵⁶ Kato, Byang. "The Youth in the African Church" [Read at the first AEA General Assembly, Limuru, 1969] in Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: *Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

Kato portrays the world as a stark dichotomy. Some persons are under the influence and power of Christ, being transformed by the gospel and the church. The rest are enslaved under Satan's dominion. Satan is characterized as the ruler of all that exists outside of Christ.

2.3 Non-technical Demonic References

As we turn to assess and synthesize Byang Kato's statements concerning the demonic (including the totality of pneumatology), we must recognize a critical issue. After taking up a comprehensive tour of Kato's references on the subject, one can discern noticeable differences in the way each reference is used. For the sake of order, we will divide Kato's statements into two categories – non-technical and technical.

2.3.1 A Definition of “Non-technical”

What is the criterion for non-technical? A number of Kato's uses of Satan, the devil, demons, and spirits are uttered in such a way that they are not intended to be teaching concerning demonology. Due to context, not everything Kato said is intended to be technical didactic material concerning the spirit world. Rather, some instances appear to be passing remarks used in a general or figurative manner.

We can unveil these non-technical references with ease when we compare Kato's overt teaching in *The Spirits* with a number of his other works.¹⁵⁷ For example, in *The Spirits*, Kato says:

Satan operates all over the world. He travels between heaven and earth (Job 1). But he is a creature and therefore he is limited. He cannot be everywhere at the

¹⁵⁷ See section 2.2.1 for a more extensive review of *The Spirits*.

*same time. However he has his agents all over the world. Demons are his agents. The word daimonion (demons) in Greek is wrongly translated devils in some Bibles. There is only one devil, Satan, but there are many demons or evil spirits.*¹⁵⁸

Keeping this type of specific and intentional rhetoric in mind, the contrast is stark when we encounter other remarks. Here are a few instances.

*An empty head is the devil's workshop.*¹⁵⁹

*The highly commendable desire for contextualization today is proving to become a tool in the hands of the devil.*¹⁶⁰

*One mistake some missionaries make is to try and see a perfect ante-type of church government they left behind in their own land. Anything other than that is of the Devil.*¹⁶¹

These statements have little theological value concerning the origin, definition, and activity of Satan and his demonic horde. Let us hone our focus to prioritize technical uses of these terms. We must sift out these particular mentions, as they do not prove profitable for the theologizing task at hand.

2.3.2 Cultural Influences

Before we move forward, a brief excursus is beneficial. Why have we cast aside these “non-technical” texts? One crucial reason is the topic of culture. Kato’s personal culture, his background, and the cultures with which he has interacted are not wholly divided from his work.

¹⁵⁸ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 17.

¹⁵⁹ Kato, Byang. "Loyalty" [Typescript of Message on Luke 19:11-27] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

¹⁶⁰ Kato, Byang. "Evangelical Structures That Should Affect the Church Nationally and Internationally." [Typescript of Speech at EFMA/IFMA Retreat 1973] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

¹⁶¹ Kato, Byang. "Tips for Guests in Africa" [SIM Orientation Course, Nigeria] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

A particular phrase like “the devil’s workshop” has more in common with a particular culture than theology. The context backs up that assertion as well, for, when these references transpire, they are sprinkled superfluously into his conversation. They are not the centerpiece of that conversation.

“Of the devil” is a biblical phrase, inaugurated into the holy book through the fiery lips of Paul in Acts 13:10. He accused Elymus of being a “son of the devil.”¹⁶² But the first epistle of John is the famous source for the phrase.

*Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is **of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works **of the devil**. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children **of the devil** are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.*¹⁶³

What is John doing? Bultmann comments, “The author draws the antithesis of being children of God and children of the devil from the Source utilized in the preceding section, and elucidates... ‘by this it is evident who are the children of God and who the children of the devil’ by means of the sentence... (‘he who does not do righteousness is not of God’).”¹⁶⁴ Thus, the letter argues that those who stray from righteousness and participate in sin are “of the devil.” Specifically,

¹⁶² “Looking at him with a withering gaze, Paul began to denounce Elymas, ‘You are a child of the devil.’ No one familiar with Aramaic (as Elymas probably would have been) could have missed the pun. His name, Bar-Jesus (in Aramaic Bar-Jeshua), meant etymologically son of the Savior. He was no son of the Savior; quite the opposite, he was son of the devil.” (Polhill, John B. *Acts*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

¹⁶³ First John 3:7-10, NASB. Bold font added for emphasis.

¹⁶⁴ Bultmann, Rudolph. *The Johannine Epistles: A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.

they are Satan's children by behavior, which John illustrates through the person of Cain in verse twelve.

However, in modern English vernacular, the phrase "of the devil" can be wielded in a more general manner. It is another way of saying "That is bad or corruptive." No significant claim of Satan's involvement is being affirmed, and Kato's *Tips for Guests in Africa* mention of the phrase apparently follows that cultural norm.

Furthermore, the proverb "An empty head is the devil's workshop" seldom connotes that someone's mind is under the direct influence of Satan.¹⁶⁵ Rather the idiom is defined as follows: "People who have nothing worthwhile to think about will usually think of something bad to do."¹⁶⁶ Kato uses this line accordingly, including it after explaining how Jesus has left tasks for His servants. So here and in other places, culture and language inform us that Kato is not always talking technically concerning the devil and demons.

2.3.3 Representation

One more issue remains before we concern ourselves with technical references. In a number of circumstances, the activity of evil spirits or demons is simply filed under the heading of Satan. An excellent example can be found in *The Power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian*. Kato preaches, "Some tongue experiences could come from psychological feeling or even from the devil."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Kato, Byang. "Loyalty" [Typescript of Message on Luke 19:11-27] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD. The proverb is also stated as "An idle brain is the devil's workshop."

¹⁶⁶ "Idle brain is the devil's workshop." McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs. <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/idle+brain+is+the+devil%27s+workshop>

¹⁶⁷ Kato, Byang. "The Power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian," *Today's Challenge* (September 1975): 6-7+.

Yes, Kato, as has been cited from *The Spirits*, does maintain a distinction between demons and their foul head Satan. But when he discusses the work of the enemy, devil, or Satan, sometimes he simply combines the contributions of the lower demons, folding them together under Satan's name. Satan's monikers are simply representative for the entire wicked realm. In the case at hand, Kato would probably contest that all false tongues are empowered by Satan's individual presence. Rather, his demonic minions would have to contribute, under Satan's sanction.

Of course, these statements which include representation are not useless for our study. They straddle the line between technical and non-technical references. Moving from here, let us investigate Kato's doctrine concerning the demonic.

2.4 Technical Demonic References

What did Byang Kato intend to teach on the demonic and the broader category of pneumatology? Having acknowledged and set aside various non-technical references on the subject, we can approach Kato's writings confidently. But we cannot merely read it. Our goal must be to systematize, discerning major themes while interacting with scholarship and providing a critique.

2.4.1 A Definition of "Technical"

For the sake of clarity, "technical references" must be outlined. While non-technical references were denoted by their idiomatic usage, technical texts are based in contexts where the intention is to communicate demonological content concerning Satan and his followers. Again,

The Spirits is critical for developing a baseline, since it is Kato's single effort completely dedicated to this topic. Here is another sample.

*The evil spirits have a set of false teachings that they spread. Such false teachings are taught even by some Bible teachers. For example, some of them teach that Satan is not real. Others, on the other hand, bow to Satan and his demons in worship. Some claim that there is no real heaven or real hell. The Bible tells us that these false teachings come from Satan and his demons and [that those demonic doctrines] will increase before Christ's return.*¹⁶⁸

But much of the material surveyed is not as direct as *The Spirits*. What should we do with instances such as these?

*There came a moment when both Adam and Eve rebelled against God. They obeyed Satan and ate of the forbidden tree. That Satan came to Eve in the guise of a crawling reptile is a fact.... Regarding the argument that it is cruel on the part of God to condemn the whole human race of humanity on the basis of one act of sin committed Eve and Adam[,] it should be remembered that it was an act of rebellion.*¹⁶⁹

*Every individual is a sinner and since individuals make up human structures, those structures are also corrupt. Human effort may and should help improve the society. But the prince of this world Satan is the ruler of this world system. The system awaits God's final judgement.*¹⁷⁰

In these cases, even though the overall context and discussion does not revolve around demonology, Kato is aiming to convey a concrete perspective concerning Satan when he is mentioned. This type of reference is actually invaluable to discerning Kato's systematic framework and how demonology disseminates into his theologizing. Thus, for the purposes of

¹⁶⁸ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 19-20. Clarification supplied.

¹⁶⁹ Kato, Byang. *Limitations of Natural Revelation*. Dallas Theological Seminary (Master's Thesis, 1971), Page 63. Clarification supplied.

¹⁷⁰ Kato, Byang. "Africa under the Cross" [1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Voice of Kenya at Nairobi Baptist Church, November 16, 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

this study, these will be considered technical as well. Taking up all of this information, we must begin to develop Kato's emphases in the pneumatological field.

2.4.2 Central Biblical and Theological Issues

As we distinguish the primary themes of Kato's offerings and statements on pneumatology, we will retain the same division (*The Spirits, Pitfalls*, and other writings) which we employed earlier. Having already journeyed through Kato's specific and singular document in the field of demonology (*The Spirits*), what are some key themes in the booklet? In the interest of succinctness, three themes are hereby proposed.

(1) *The Spirits* indicates that every power is grounded in God's power. While one could be tempted to fear the spirits if they seem independent, God's nature surpasses and dwarfs the demonic realm. Kato appeals directly to Genesis 1 and Psalm 148, asserting:

*God who always IS, created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. So in our dealing with the origin of spirits, we must exclude God. Although He too is Spirit, He is the uncreated Spirit since He Himself did the creating. All other spirits are created beings.*¹⁷¹

By appealing to the Creator/creature distinction, Kato lowers the sway of the spirit world.

"[Spirits] may be stronger, wiser and faster than men, but still they cannot do everything as God can."¹⁷² Who other than God can create out of nothing? Thus, God, through the Son Jesus

Christ, is shown to be a sure refuge, and Kato's theology funnels into a pastoral end by dispelling dread.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 4.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ In his conclusion, Kato encourages, "If you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone to be saved from your sins, be assured that you are now a child of God and that you do not need to fear evil spirits or seek any help from them through magic or charms." (Ibid, Pages 31-32.)

(2) In the context of non-Christian spirituality, spiritist activity is steadily considered demonic. Kato does not hesitate to strike against all that falls outside the biblical boundaries of Christianity. He declares:

*The Christian should not take part in idol worship in any way. This includes eating what is sacrificed to idols, dancing to the honour of pagan gods or wearing dress that represents pagan gods. Demons are behind the objects that pagans worship. “What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not God. I do not want you to be partners with demons” (1 Corinthians 10:19-20).*¹⁷⁴

By making this statement, Kato is opposing syncretism, aiming to leave no grounds by which a Christian can express spiritual loyalty to anyone except God. His citation of 1 Corinthians 10:19-20 is called upon for biblical support.¹⁷⁵ And Kato’s case against syncretism extends into ancestral matters. Kato says:

*“Necromancy” is a term which signifies conversing with the dead for the purpose of consultation or getting information about the future. In African Traditional Religions, it is believed that the dead people are still very much a part of this life.... Some people feel strongly that African Christians should maintain [contact] with the spirits of the dead. They say the Catholic churches pray through deceased “saints”. But this is wrong for Christians to do.*¹⁷⁶

Kato undercuts a cultural norm! Martialing Isaiah 8:19 to his cause, Kato presents the practice as prohibited by God.¹⁷⁷ After elucidating that God’s hatred of such practices carries forward

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, Pages 24-25.

¹⁷⁵ “The presupposition of vv 19–20 is the same as of 8:5: behind the gods there lurk demons. Paul bases this view on Deut 32:17. This makes his demand clear. Sacrifices would make the demons into gods, powers, and bring the participants into bondage to them.” (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

¹⁷⁶ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 25-26. Clarification inserted.

¹⁷⁷ “Though the people sought mediums and underworld spirits to determine the future (v. 19), true knowledge and security concerning the future could only come from the Lord. Seeking the dead to determine the fate of the living was far inferior to the law and to the testimony (v. 20).” (Rydelnik,

into the New Testament (quoting Acts 13:10), all discussion with spirits is declared verboten.

“To consult with the spirits of the dead is to deal with the demonic world because it is demons who assume the role of the deceased.”¹⁷⁸ False religion and necromancy are lumped together and shoved away, since both invoke demons, directly or indirectly.¹⁷⁹

(3) African traditional religion and culture is held accountable to the Word of God. Kato chides Christians, begging that they would avoid syncretism. Rather, the converted African is expected to have a new relationship (transformed by Scripture) to cultural norms concerning the spirits. The framework and title of the booklet itself exalts the Bible! The content reflects this as well, for in a section concerning demonic teachings, Kato instructs:

*Always compare every teaching or practice with Jesus Christ. Some questions you can ask are: Does such practice or teaching recognize that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man? Does it uphold the fact that He was born of a Virgin, died and rose again as the only Saviour of the one who accepts Him? ... Does it recognize that the wicked may even prosper in this life through their dealings with evil spirits but the day is coming when Jesus Christ will put down all principalities and powers, and become Lord of Lords and King of Kings? Only the teaching that answers these questions positively is in line with God's Word.*¹⁸⁰

His biblicist commitments shine throughout his work. Any teaching that deviates concerning core issues (especially the person and activity of Jesus Christ) is worthy of disapproval. In his call for discernment, Kato wants everything compared to the Word of God, to hold any teaching (culturally accepted or otherwise) accountable.

Michael, and James Spencer, *The Moody Bible Commentary*, Page 1023.) See section 2.2.1 for additional commentary.

¹⁷⁸ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 28.

¹⁷⁹ From Kato's perspective, human deceased spirits are not normative participants in the world of the living, though he recognizes the unusual story of Samuel's presence in 1 Samuel 28.

¹⁸⁰ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 31.

Byang Kato's longest work, *Pitfalls*, bears a number of theological themes which are fundamental to comprehending his demonology. Again, let us synthesize three more themes which saturate Kato's doctrine.

(1) African experiences are valid, and they relate to biblical demonology and the person of Satan. At length, Kato details his cultural heritage among the Jaba people. His tribe has a long history and relationship with spirits. *Hyong*, the word for spirit, is a common concept. "It is used in reference to the spirit primarily out to harm people."¹⁸¹ This has resulted in an atmosphere of fear, since "Jaba believe that the whole world is full of spirits."¹⁸² Possession and exorcism are a significant feature of the life and culture of the Jaba, and the person of *Kuno*, which Kato equivocates with Satan, is a reality to them. "Jaba have never doubted the existence or activities of Satan."¹⁸³

Kato does not treat this cultural information as rubbish. Instead, viewing it as a confirmation of the biblical revelation which is held up against the truth claims of every culture, Kato says:

*Jaba's belief in the supernatural forces should be cultivated. This is an indication that the Supernatural has not totally abandoned man.... Clues, weak clues at that, are the supernatural vestiges in the unbeliever; only the faint steps that man is more than flesh and blood. They are indications that the Supernatural has been here, and that at one time men "heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8).... Jaba religion is a recognition of the craving after the Supreme Being, a search for reality in life, but at the same time a flight from God the Creator and Redeemer.*¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 36.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid, Page 37.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, Pages 37-38.

The Jaba people still retain fragments of general revelation, of which Kato encourages cultivation. As in, this is fertile ground in which the transcendent truth of Scripture can be demonstrated as relevant and insightful to the Jaba (due to their fearful predicament under heinous spirits). While not every religious and cultural thought of the Jaba is affirmed, Kato certainly views pneumatology as something where the African context offers valuable information which concords with the biblical message and mission.

(2) Drawing from his personal, family, and tribal background, another theme is that demons (evil spirits) are agents of fear. Throughout Kato's section on the spirit world in *Pitfalls*, the disposition of fear abounds. Concerning the spirits and the accompanying practices, he records the terms "frightened," "harm," "dominated," "fear," "possessed," "bothering," "inflicted," and "troubled."¹⁸⁵ While a few "positive" aspects of the spirits are mentioned (prophecy, miracles), fear and oppression is the prism by which Kato portrays the majority of the spirits' activities.

(3) The final theme in *Pitfalls* that we should recognize is that Kato believes that the devil is behind syncretism in Africa – that is, the blending of Christianity and paganism. Always at the forefront of Kato's concerns, he detests the idea that African Christianity can simply retain various religious practices in addition to Christian beliefs. Christ is diminished, and salvation is certainly "no monopoly of Christianity" if syncretism is fostered.¹⁸⁶ Kato warns:

*But the devil has many other avenues for fighting against Christ and His church and he knows where best to succeed. Christo-paganism appears to be the area of attack within the next generation. The battle has started. The unique claims of Christ are regarded as eccentricities.*¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, Pages 36-37.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, Pages 173-174.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, Page 173.

This is no light or passing comment! The syncretistic model is pushed by theologians and scholars (some of whom are explicitly opposed throughout *Pitfalls*). And in the spirit of 1 Timothy 4:1 which warns of those teaching the “doctrines of demons,” Kato brands the theological currents as a devilish invention, similar to the temptations the early church faced in the Greco-Roman world.

Pivoting to the remainder of Kato’s discussions is vital. Under the heading of pneumatology, what themes and biblical issues rise to prominence throughout these documents? Three final points stride to the forefront.

(1) Satan is the leader of a world system that is in rebellion against God. This theme saturates much of Kato’s attitudes concerning false teaching and spiritism, and it shines in a couple of his writings.

*Every individual is a sinner and since individuals make up human structures, those structures are also corrupt. Human effort may and should help improve the society. But the prince of this world Satan is the ruler of this world system. The system awaits God’s final judgment.*¹⁸⁸

*As the Christian church gets rooted in various cultures of the world, pulling down the kingdom of Satan, the enemy of souls, will react.*¹⁸⁹

Kato frames the global rule and the world system as an inherently personal entity. People, individually and corporately, contribute to it, and Satan superintends its aims. Kato admits that these power structures can have positive influences through social advances, and the church’s global expansion drastically affects Satan’s rule over these systems. However, this world system will ultimately be dismantled by God.

¹⁸⁸ Kato, Byang. "Africa under the Cross" [1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Voice of Kenya at Nairobi Baptist Church, November 16, 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

¹⁸⁹ Kato, Byang. "The Church in the Closing Years of the Twentieth Century," *World Vision Magazine*, (December 1974), n. pag.

(2) Spiritism is a false religion – a “cult” in the negative sense of the word. Under the blanket term “spiritism,” Kato criticizes the bulk of traditional African religious thought. Having stated that cults do contain elements of truth which “usually blinds the eyes of seekers after truth,” Kato holds spiritism up to the Word of God and finds it wanting. He says:

The basic teaching of the adherents of this cult is that they can communicate with the spirit world.... Erroneous teachings summed up:

Deny the personality of Christ.

Deny the fall of man.

Deny resurrection and man’s eternal destiny.

*Seek to abandon Christian ordinances and worship.*¹⁹⁰

Now, the difficulty is in discerning what Kato would identify as truth in the midst of these false teachings, but with a fair degree of certainty, we can presume that he affirms the reality of the spirit world. Kato’s opposition is targeted at the fascination with accessing that spirit world. So the religious and cultural norms of spiritism are depicted as an unruly mixture of true and false ideas about the spirits. It is no surprise that Kato recognized the need to write a specific booklet on the subject.

(3) The events of the garden literally occurred, and the character behind the serpent is Satan. Kato does not view the text as a figurative passage involving mythical players. After quoting the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Kato asserts:

The accounts of Genesis and the rest of the Scriptures make it plain that man did not continue in the state of purity and sweet communion with God. There came a moment when both Adam and Eve rebelled against God. They obeyed Satan and ate of the forbidden tree. That Satan came to Eve in the guise of a crawling reptile is a fact. James Oliver Buswell’s suggestion that “the Genesis account has nothing to say about a biological reptile. ‘The Serpent’ is not said to be one

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

of the 'beasts of the field' but to be more subtle than any of them and destined for a greater curse than any (v. 14)'' is a mere sophistry.¹⁹¹

Couched in the broader theme of sin's entry into the world, Kato introduces the original participants in the drama. Kato treats Adam and Eve as actual persons, and the serpent is deemed to be Satan due to its unusual ability to converse, reason, and lie. More than that, Kato's demeanor seems absolutely hostile toward any other perspective on the matter.

For our purposes, we must remember that Kato depicts Satan as a personal agent and that Kato is comfortable with understanding the garden (and the snake) through the lens of his systematic doctrines on Satan. Having articulated Kato's key themes in the arena of pneumatology, may we seize these thoughts and investigate Evangelical responses to Kato's perspectives.

2.4.3 Interaction with Contemporary Influential Evangelical Scholarship

Kato's literary output ceased in the 1970's. Has the Evangelical realm moved on from Kato's assertions? Are his works an outlier, then and now? What insights do influential Evangelical scholars provide concerning the themes which we highlighted in Kato's demonology? Let us paint the Evangelical backdrop using a current compilation to ascertain where Kato stands within the spectrum.

An exceptional source for interlocutors is *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*. While the overall aim of this comparative book is to clarify the differing resistance perspectives toward the demonic, these particular warfare positions are firmly rooted in diverse theological thoughts on the nature of the demonic itself. Additionally, we should also mention that only

¹⁹¹ Kato, Byang. *Limitations of Natural Revelation*. Dallas Theological Seminary (Master's Thesis, 1971), Page 63. Unusually citing two sentences in the middle of a sentence, Kato is referencing Buswell's *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Revelation* (Page 264).

three of the contributors (David Powlison, Gregory Boyd, and Peter Wagner) are related to Evangelicalism, and under the prescribed parameters, the late Walter Wink's teachings will be excluded at this time.¹⁹² However, the three remaining writers will each be assessed, and we will let the readers draw their own conclusions concerning their fidelity (or lack thereof) to the Evangelical movement.

Before we proceed any further, commonalities between Powlison, Boyd, and Wagner (along with his coauthor Rebecca Greenwood) are worth mentioning. The editors of the compilation, Eddy and Beilby, chronicle the shifting winds of Western thought which have gravitated away from affirmative statements concerning a personal spirit world. They comment:

... in the traditional view demons are understood to be personal spirit beings intent on fostering evil throughout the earth. In this present volume, three of the four viewpoints under consideration affirm and build on this traditional understanding of angels and demons (Boyd, Powlison, and Wagner and Greenwood).¹⁹³

This is a massive point, especially in the context of the broader debate between these three theologians! While they may bluntly disagree on other points, diagnosing different demonic strategies and prescribing different Christian remedies, they converge at this pivotal doctrine, eschewing the theological trend. As an Evangelical, Kato is well at home here on this specific issue. The editors add:

¹⁹² Due to his relationship with Open Theism, Boyd is sometimes not considered Evangelical, but he himself does use the label under certain conditions. On his website, in response to the question "Do you consider yourself to be an 'Evangelical Christian,'" Boyd says, "I hold to a high view of biblical inspiration and most of my theological views are in line with what would be considered 'evangelical.' So in this sense, I consider myself an 'evangelical.' But the word 'evangelical,' as well as the word 'Christian,' has become associated with many things that are radically inconsistent with the example of Jesus' life, which we are to emulate. So I'm very hesitant to identify myself with either term until I know what my audience means by them." <http://reknew.org/about/faq/>

¹⁹³ Beilby, James and Paul Eddy. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, Page 21.

*While there appears to be broad agreement among most evangelical scholars today regarding the existence and nature of angelic beings, including Satan and demons, perspectives vary on questions such as how much authority and influence these powers of darkness exert in the world on this side of the victorious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, how this influence relates to the sovereignty and providence of God, and the degree to which explicit attention should be given to these creatures within a contemporary theological system. When dealing with Satan and the demonic, it is common to find evangelical theologians emphasizing the importance of maintaining a “balance”...*¹⁹⁴

The book argues that Evangelicals agree on this point, yet they diverge in ancillary issues.

However, Kato is again found within Evangelicalism’s norm in pursuing this “balance” (which is a reference to C. S. Lewis’ balance, wherein the twin-headed evil of either unbelief or obsession concerning the demonic is avoided). Kato also embarks toward such a balance. One can easily discern that he is not infatuated with the demonic, since only one of his works directly pertains to the subject, yet when Kato does discuss evil spirits, he treats it with gravitas, urging people to be wary and cautious of these spiritual agents of destruction.

Kato finds a close ally in Powlison. *The Spirits*, Kato’s definitive composition on the demonic, bears much in common with Powlison’s overt statements concerning Satan and the fallen host. From the Scriptures, Powlison says:

*We learn (and need to know) that “Satan” is not merely a personification of impersonal forces (like “Mother Nature”). Evil comes in person, a perverse covenant lord aiming to command our disloyalty to the true King. The devil is a purposeful, intelligent, malevolent personal agent.*¹⁹⁵

We learn (and need to know) that the animistic, occult, superstitious view of demonic agencies is false. Animism exaggerates the personhood and autonomy of the forces of darkness. It locates the human drama within a haunted universe. It

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, Page 22.

¹⁹⁵ Powlison, David. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, Page 91.

*diminishes the significant of personal and sociocultural evils. One of the consistent purposes of the Old Testament is to demythologize the superstitious worldview. Common animistic beliefs and practices – for example, the influence of ancestral spirits or of territorial demons, demon-inhabitants as the agency behind human sins, techniques to do combat with evil spirits – are systematically undermined by Scripture’s revelation of evil.*¹⁹⁶

The similarities with Kato are straightforward. Kato and Powlison are united in their definition of Satan and the undermining of animism. While Kato may stress the presence and influence of spirits more than Powlison, Kato certainly has distaste for those the superstitious remedies which have propagated among Africans. Even spiritual warfare is not described in *The Spirits* as primarily exorcism-oriented. Saying that “Christians should be well armed by depending on the Lord for victory over Satan and his forces,” Kato prescribes abstinence from evil practices and insists on holy living, in keeping with the armor of God.¹⁹⁷

Boyd and Kato are on separate wavelengths, except in the basic aspects of Evangelical agreement already outlined. Kato elevates the control and power of God in his treatment of the demonic, even introducing Satan and the fallen angels in *The Spirits* through the lens of the God Almighty – the Transcendent Spirit above all other spirits. Boyd’s perspective on evil does not deny that God will defeat Satan and his comrades, but opposing the idea that everything comes to pass is God’s sovereign will, he says:

This perspective, I argue, conflicts with a fundamental motif that runs throughout Scripture in which God battles cosmic powers and humans to establish his will “on earth as it is in heaven.” Hence, while it’s certain God will eventually triumph over his cosmic and earthly foes, much of what comes to pass in history does not reflect God’s benevolent will but rather reflects the wills of agents working at cross-purposes with God. The world we live in looks like a war zone

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 29.

*because the world is a war zone, and followers of Jesus have an important role to play in how this conflict unfolds.*¹⁹⁸

This relationship between God's character and the activity of the spirit world runs afoul with Kato's demonology. While Kato does not harp on theodicy with regularity, his elevation of the divine Being's power and control does place a rift between Boyd and him. Kato briefly considers:

*... everything that God created was good. He cannot be responsible for all that has gone wrong with His creation. You may ask why, if God was good and all-powerful, did He allow evil to come into His beautiful universe? This question bothers me too. It has bothered philosophers and religious leaders. The ultimate answer lies with God. 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children, forever, that we may do all the words of this law' (Deuteronomy 29:29). So we do not know fully why God allowed sin to spoil His beautiful creation. But we must remember that the spirits are intelligent, personal beings with the ability and privilege to choose.*¹⁹⁹
*God may use [evil spirits] for the purpose of judgment or testing... His People. He does so by permitting them to carry on their wicked programme.*²⁰⁰

Although Kato does sketch the war that is currently in progress, God's ultimate control and purposes are left unquestioned. Kato even asserts that God uses these malicious characters for noble purposes, undermining evil itself by turning it into good. In this respect, Kato would presumably object with the wording and substance of Boyd's demonology.

Despite the fact that Wagner and Greenwood would heartily approve with Kato's demonological ontology, their theological frameworks for understanding demonic activity and Christian resistance bear significant distinctions from one another. Greenwood trifurcates the

¹⁹⁸ Boyd, Gregory. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, Pages 129-130.

¹⁹⁹ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 7.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Page 18.

work of the enemy into Ground-Level, Occult-Level, and Strategic-Level.²⁰¹ In each instance, evil supernatural beings are involved in deceiving and enslaving humanity. Ground-Level refers to individual harassment and the demonization of individuals. Occult-Level stands for the more systematic attempts of the enemy to manipulate humanity through false religion and occultism. Kato does not wield such terms, but in effect, he confirms both of these realms in *The Spirits* and elsewhere.

Wagner and Greenwood's third strand of demonic activity, Strategic-Level, is the controversial arena, and it is heightened by them as the linchpin for Christian warfare against the dark powers. Greenwood defines this for us:

*Strategic-level spiritual warfare requires power confrontations with high ranking principalities and powers as described by Paul in Ephesians 6:12. These demonic entities are assigned to geographical territories and social networks. They are also referred to as territorial spirits. Their assignment is to keep large numbers of humans – networked through cities, neighborhoods, regions, nations, people groups, industries, governments, businesses, education systems, religious alliances, media, or any other form of social institution – in spiritual captivity.*²⁰²

While she is obviously preoccupied with the practical ramifications of this (which consumes the many paragraphs which follow), a number of theological commitments pervade. This level of demonic activity, under the world dominance of Satan himself, proves to be the coordinating factor which invigorates all other activity. With this as the core concept behind the demonic realm, the result is that Wagner and Greenwood advocate for a host of territorial and regional resistance techniques, in order that the plans of the enemy might be foiled.

Kato affirms Satan's rule over the earth and how he oversees the corrupt "structures" of this age. In *Africa under the Cross*, he says:

²⁰¹ Greenwood, Rebecca. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, Page 179.

²⁰² Ibid.

*Every individual is a sinner and since individuals make up human structures, those structures are also corrupt. Human effort may and should help improve the society. But the prince of this world Satan is the ruler of this world system. The system awaits God's final judgement. The believers being saved out of this world system, are called out of darkness into His marvelous light.*²⁰³

Furthermore, Kato comments concerning this in *The Spirits*, as he outlines the titles and roles of Satan throughout the Bible.

10. God of this world; this name shows that he is behind all the religious systems of the world which oppose God (2 Corinthians 4:4)....

*12. Prince of this world; this speaks of his possible influence over the governments of this world[,] some of which oppose Jesus Christ (John 14:30).*²⁰⁴

But as a whole, Kato dwells on what Wagner and Greenwood would label as Ground-Level and Occult-Level demonic activity. While he freely acknowledges Satan and his servants' interactions with the systems of the earth, in accordance with Scripture, Kato's emphasis lies elsewhere, and Strategic-Level activity and territorial spirits are not at the forefront.

Having developed the three Evangelical viewpoints contained in *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, Kato appears to be among friendly company. Concerning ontology, they all unite on the reality and personality of Satan and demons. Yet of the three, Kato bears the most in common with Powlison, since they espouse similar responses to the demonic powers which inhabit this world.

²⁰³ Kato, Byang. "Africa under the Cross" [1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Voice of Kenya at Nairobi Baptist Church, November 16, 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

²⁰⁴ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 17.

2.5 Critique

After a survey of Kato's demonology, a summation of its major themes, and an assessment of his standing among current Evangelical demonologists, a critique is in order. In the interest of brevity, three strengths and three weaknesses will be gleaned from Kato's contributions. Having mapped out the course ahead, let us commence with the strengths of Kato's foray into demonology.

First, the Creator/creature distinction is refreshingly clear. Satan and his spirits are not depicted as equal players in the authority structure of the universe. Rather, they are small participants, underneath the imposing presence of an omniscient and omnipotent God. Kato states:

*God as Spirit is absolutely different from all other classes of spirits. He is the Creator. Every aspect of His character is infinite; that is, without limit or comparison. He alone knows everything. He also can do everything that is not against His nature. God alone can be everywhere at the same time.*²⁰⁵

Beyond the pastoral implications of this emphasis, it alleviates any concerns about introducing a counter-biblical dualism, which would undermine the pillar of monotheism that upholds the Old and New Testament narrative. The only way to understand Satan and evil spirits correctly is to know God correctly, and in accordance with that framework, Kato treats demonology with propriety.

Second, Kato shows no tolerance for any adulation or adoration of demons (i.e. evil spirits). He bemoans the fact that spirit worship is a feature of many cultures, including his own, saying, "There is a revival of spirit worship today. This is not limited to Africa but is found everywhere."²⁰⁶ Instead of worship, Kato prescribes avoidance and resistance against the

²⁰⁵ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 4.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, Page 20.

demonic host. Refusing to be awed by acts of power and deception, Kato tells us that “God may allow Satan to do mighty things but there is a boundary beyond which God will not allow him to go.”²⁰⁷ We are called to reject such works, which are feeble in comparison to God’s work. We must be alert, aware, and armed with the spiritual equipment of Ephesians 6. Ultimately, God and the privileges we are provided from the divine hand are our refuge and strength.

Third, Kato is constantly aiming to present what he believes the Scriptures say about the spirits and demons. He is not interested in offering a personal or humanist philosophy, and hence he regularly quotes and cites texts as he discusses demonology. With the Bible held up as the Word of God, Kato grants God’s opinion authority on the matter. For a man who has an extensive background among evil spirits, as his own testimony portrays, this type of deference to God’s perspective is humbling. Of course, one may debate whether or not Kato used the Scriptures correctly in every instance, but the aim and intention is plain: Kato desires God’s verdict on the demonic.²⁰⁸

Weaknesses must also be mentioned. First, Kato does not have a well-defined category for global and institutional demonic influence. Though probably not enough scriptural material exists to develop an elaborate territorial warfare system as Wagner and Greenwood wield, the Scriptures do express themselves in this regard, via Daniel 10, Deuteronomy 32:8-9, and elsewhere.²⁰⁹ Instead, Kato predominantly focuses on the personal and religious elements of

²⁰⁷ Ibid, Page 23.

²⁰⁸ Kato’s use of Scripture can be questioned in a number of places. For instance, he said, “Even at death [evil spirits] still have no claims on a Christian’s body (Jude 9).” However, the peculiar situation of Michael and Satan discussing Moses’ body probably does not have a significant bearing on the application Kato offers. (Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 30.)

²⁰⁹ Consider this commentary on Daniel 10:13, “*The prince of the kingdom of Persia*: This indicates the patron angel of Persia. The notion that different nations were allotted to different gods or heavenly beings was widespread in the ancient world. In Deut 32:8–9 we read that ‘When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according

demonological activity, and this may be a result of his practical, pastoral ends. Yes, Kato does mention the devil's world system in *Africa Under the Cross* and the elemental spirits in *Jesus Christ Frees*, but both themes are woefully under-investigated.²¹⁰ And *The Spirits* does not cure the deficiency.

Second, Kato can be quick to attribute behavior to the devil. Especially in his desire to stamp out "Christo-pagan" syncretism, he holds no punches. Let us recall his words from *Pitfalls*.

*But the devil has many other avenues for fighting against Christ and His church and he knows where best to succeed. Christo-paganism appears to be the area of attack within the next generation. The battle has started. The unique claims of Christ are regarded as eccentricities.*²¹¹

Certainly, biblical precedent exists for designating teachings (and the persons who propagate them) as satanic. Jesus Himself behaved this way.²¹² However, Kato insouciantly brandishes the devil in some cases. As we cited earlier, Kato said, "The highly commendable desire for contextualization today is proving to become a tool in the hands of the devil."²¹³ In instances such as these, a more careful approach is preferred, since this statement leaves us wondering, "How exactly is Satan involved?" In the article, that clarification is never provided, and regardless of

to the number of the sons of God.'" (Collins, John Joseph, Frank Moore Cross, and Adela Yarbro Collins. *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

For more on the textual debate behind Deuteronomy 32:8, Michael S. Heiser's paper "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God" argues that "sons of God" is the preferred reading, instead of the Masoretic Text's "sons of Israel." <http://www.thedivinecouncil.com/DT32BibSac.pdf>

²¹⁰ See sections 2.2.3 and 2.4.2 for more on this.

²¹¹ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 173.

²¹² John 8:44. Jesus called people the offspring of Satan, since they mimicked Satan's lying ways. "As a result of the actions of the Jews in relation to his coming, Jesus judged, they made it self-evident that they were children of a different father: the liar and the murderer..." (Borchert, Gerald L. *John 1-11*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

²¹³ Kato, Byang. "Evangelical Structures That Should Affect the Church Nationally and Internationally." [Typescript of Speech at EFMA/IFMA Retreat 1973] in Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: *Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

whether his claim is correct or not, we can be easily led to presume that Kato is merely spoiling an honest debate by demonizing his opponents.

Third, in his desire to oppose spiritism in the African context, Kato takes missteps in some of his rebukes toward cultural practices. One of his prohibitions includes:

*The Christian should not take part in idol worship in any way. This included eating what is sacrificed to idols, dancing to the honour of pagan gods or wearing dress that represents pagan gods. Demons are behind the objects that pagans worship. “What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not God. I do not want you to be partners with demons” (1 Corinthians 10:19, 20).*²¹⁴

While Kato’s prohibition is correct, Kato unfortunately neglects the remainder of Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 10, and the absence of the following verses could result in unnecessarily hasty attitude toward food and dress, which are basic elements of community, culture, and church life. Paul clarifies:

*All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor. Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience’ sake. FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S AND ALL IT CONTAINS. If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before without asking questions for conscience’ sake.*²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 24-25.

²¹⁵ First Corinthians 10:23-27, NASB. “It is frequently maintained that in Paul’s day practically all meat offered in the market came from animals that had been sacrificed, since a minimum of ritual custom was observed in slaughtering them. Yet this cannot be maintained in such general terms. In any case, Paul’s observations are independent of this question, or rather, they render it superfluous. He sets out simply from the everyday practice of buying in the market. Whether only sacrificial meat or also ‘profane’ meat is offered is a matter of indifference, since the principle of freedom is upheld. The conscience is not involved at all.” (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database)

Kato's prohibition of eating meat sacrificed to idols/demons was well-founded, but it lacks the nuance necessary to result in freedom. In the absence of knowledge, Paul prescribed an attitude of indifference whether meat was sacrificed to idols. Missing that key piece of information, Kato's statement in *The Spirits* could result in unneeded questions and the unnecessary upheaval of cultural norms.

Finally, while Kato's demonology lacks specifics concerning deliverance ministry, we would be amiss to not recognize his theological similarity to the Neo-Pentecostal Christianity that is sweeping across Africa. By Pentecostals, we mean "a significant group within evangelical Christianity" who emphasize miraculous experiences and deliverances.²¹⁶ Practices may differ, but the demonologies are largely the same with Pentecostalism's affirmation that:

*[Deities/gods] are not considered... viceroys of God as taught in traditional religion. African Pentecostals associate deities in the traditional religion with demons. They repudiated cultic practices... They find justification for their actions from texts like 1 Corinthians 10:20.*²¹⁷

As Anderson expresses, "Pentecostals in general share a New Testament belief in the possibility of demonic influence in human behavior."²¹⁸ This focus upon the depiction of the demonic in the Scriptures is what creates the significant doctrinal overlap between Kato and Neo-Pentecostalism.

²¹⁶ Larbi, Kingsley. "African Pentecostalism in the Context of Global Pentecostal Ecumenical Fraternity: Challenges and Opportunities," *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. 24:2 (2002), Page 148. Discerning the exact relationship between Evangelicalism and Neo-Pentecostalism is problematic. But concerning demonology (as least within the doctrinal sphere), the overlap is significant, as demonstrated in Kato.

²¹⁷ Ibid, Page 148.

²¹⁸ Anderson, Allan. "Exorcism and Conversion to African Pentecostalism," *Exchange*. 35.1 (2006), Page 117.

2.6 Conclusion

In this second chapter, we have journeyed through an overview of Kato's demonological references. Tracing his thoughts on pneumatology through *The Spirits, Pitfalls*, and his other writings, we found a significant quantity of material. Yet the quality of the material varied, and the various references to the demonic were categorized and assessed as either non-technical or technical statements. Concerning Kato's non-technical references, we specifically detailed cultural and figurative usages. Then we moved into the heart of Kato's demonology by discerning the central biblical and theological themes among Kato's technical references. After utilizing the Evangelical sources in *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views* as interlocutors, we finally provided a critique, with strengths and weaknesses, of Kato's pneumatology.

After this broad analysis, we must move toward a more narrow focus. Specifically, how does Kato's Evangelical demonology hold up in light of the cultural currents of the 21st century? Does the increasing globalization and multiculturalism expose or vindicate Kato? Let us address the relationship of Kato's demonology to the multicultural world we inhabit.

3. Byang Kato's Demonology in a Multicultural World

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, we explored the life of Kato and his efforts pertaining to biblical demonology. But while Kato's content was sifted and critiqued, we are left with a critical question regarding the audience of demonological discourse. The globe that Kato knew has changed. How does his demonology fair now, in light of these new conditions?

We inhabit a world in transition. For better or for worse, the forces of globalization appear to be unstoppable. Economic and cultural structures are extending beyond their historical and traditional regions. One example raised by Schreiter details that even by the late twentieth century, one particular parish in north Chicago encompassed "fifty-three language groups... five of which held services" in a single church each week.²¹⁹ Cultures are intersecting, and they even mingle in educational, economic, and ecclesiological contexts.

But not everyone views globalization as the apex of a new age. Nadar, a South African theologian, criticizes globalization as a front for Western colonial interests, wherein the world is globalized to further Western ideals and systems.²²⁰ Drawing from the Nigerian author Ukpong, Nadar advocates for a better way. Instead of settling for a Western globalization, she requests that we form a global village. "In Africa, the term 'village' implies community and mutuality, both of which – at the very least – include the notions of respect, justice and equity."²²¹ In other words, due to the multicultural world we enjoy with its richness, we ought to eschew any cultural

²¹⁹ Schreiter, Robert J. "Multicultural Ministry: Theory, Practice, Theology," *New Theology Review* 5.3 (1992), n. pag.

²²⁰ Nadar, Sarojini. "Contextual Theological Education in Africa," *The Ecumenical Review* 59.2-3 (2007), Pages 235-41.

²²¹ Ibid, Page 236.

supremacy in order that a global village (which respects and values every culture without exalting one) may flourish.

The Christian must think critically concerning how to act and speak the gospel in this multicultural context. Moreau calls for a dynamic and comprehensive contextualization, intoning that the difficulty increases in an urban, globalized context. He says:

*Contextualization, like local societies, should never be thought of as static. At the very least, each generation of Christians in a culture will need to contextualize the Christian faith in ways that are faithful to Scripture and indigenous to them. In times of radical cultural change (urbanization, acculturation, globalization) the process of contextualizing the faith will be a never-ending one, offering rich opportunity for the people of God to be rethinking and living out their faith in light of ways Scripture challenges them and their societies as they change.*²²²

Thankfully, Moreau's words remind us of the joy of this challenge, as the shifting culture provides us another opportunity to return to the Word of God, instigating meditation and renewing communication.

To Nadar's concerns, Moreau encourages us to view contextualization as "a two way process in which all sides contribute." That is, no culture should attempt to gain in the process. Either in a traditional missionary context abroad or in a multicultural community, we should not aim "to show the members of the second culture how they should express their faith and their lives" based on our cultural affinities.²²³ A multicultural Christian community (e.g. church, parachurch group, theological seminary) requires everyone involved to be culturally sensitive and socially adept, being intentionally reflective to stem the imposition of their own cultural presuppositions.

²²² Moreau, Scott. "Contextualization That Is Comprehensive," *Missiology: An International Review* 34.3 (2006), Page 326.

²²³ Ibid, Page 327.

The difficulty of this contextualization endeavor in multiculturalism is further complicated by the complexity of culture itself. Kraft distinguishes between “surface-level culture” and “deep-level culture.”²²⁴ Surface-level culture pertains to behavior and practices, and deep-level culture relates to thinking and value commitments – worldview. A multicultural Christian community could (and should) graciously embrace many forms of learned surface-culture, creating an elegant tapestry of unity and diversity among God’s people. But the great peril rests in how to respond to diverse worldviews. We should respect different ways of thinking (e.g. different parenting methods), but Christ calls His followers to deny themselves, to repent, and to be renewed in their thinking. As Christians, our culturally conditioned worldviews are not static, and as a multicultural community, in some sense, we continue to grow and share in a common worldview, even as we encounter and enjoy the diversity of various cultures.

The dangers at this point are many. We do not desire the complete destruction of a particular worldview, since culture (both familial and societal) contains elements of God’s common grace. By this, a retention of old religious practices (for the African, European, or Asian) is not implied. We will point out in chapter 5 that religious systems are not merely cultural systems. Rather, religions are tied to supernatural powers, and we must beware of uncritically seeking a “sympathetic perspective” of cultural/religious past, not expecting and encountering allegiance problems in the supernatural realm.²²⁵ (The ease with which we can attempt to claim multiple deities is astonishing.) Thus, the great project is to treasure culture even as we weed out the religious allegiances that are rooted in our cultures. Pre-Christian worldviews (deep-culture) cannot be entirely retained, lest (for example) Africans relegate

²²⁴ Kraft, Charles H. “Culture, Worldview and Contextualization,” Page 385.

http://media2.gracechurchsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/kraft_culture_worldview.pdf

²²⁵ Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*, Page 71. To be fair, Bediako is not uncritically seeking that perspective, but his argumentation certainly opens the door for a view upon African religious past which could lead to syncretism.

Christ, not taking Him along “in grave movements – of sickness and death, of plague and suffering in general.”²²⁶ Then because of deep-culture in these times of difficulty, they return to “traditional and well-tried methods of countering the effects of evil and giving assurance in a world of uncertainty and danger.”²²⁷ And the complexity intensifies even as we consider the African worldview, because within Africanism, diversity flourishes, though “there may be similarities here and there...”²²⁸ As Oduyoye testifies, “one cannot use the world culture in the singular.”²²⁹ Many African Christians (and Christians in general) are on parallel but distinct contextualization journeys.

Yet, in the midst of this mixed field of pitfall and harvest in embracing culture, the multicultural community cultivates hope. When we are united together in this simultaneously culture-retaining and self-crucifying expedition, we find in one another the courage, the example to proceed. As we pursue Christ, we are buoyed by the many other Christians from many other cultures who both yield to Christ elements of their culture and retain culture that is good and compatible with Christ.

In this study, demonology is our focus, and while we should be grateful that our current endeavor is not broader, we are faced with the fact that demonology (and the way we relate to the subject) is closely related to culture. How should we understand and discuss demonology in a multicultural context, and how do Kato’s demonological writings hold up amidst these changing times? We begin by assessing the relationship between demonology and culture itself.

²²⁶ Dickson, Kwesi. “African Theology: Origin, Methodology and Content,” *The Journal of Religious Thought*. 32.2, Page 36.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Pobee, John S. *Toward an African Theology*, Page 44.

²²⁹ Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. “Christianity and African Culture,” *International Review of Mission*. 84.332-3, Page 78.

3.2 The Relationship of Demonology and Culture

Virtually every culture has a category for unseen spirits and demonic beings. While repelling the accusations of modern Western thought, Ferdinando, in his landmark work on the demonic, argues:

*Most peoples, for most of history, have believed in spirits, witchcraft and sorcery. The Ohio State University research project found that some 74% of 488 societies studied throughout the world had possession beliefs, including 81% of 11 African societies studied.... While truth is not established by majorities, the great consensus of most of humanity through time suggests that it may be modern scepticism which is idiosyncratic, and that the burden of proof should fall upon those who deny the reality of such phenomena.*²³⁰

Humanity perceives spirits as a reality, even in our supposedly enlightened (Westernized) age, for the “belief in spirits is widespread in the ancient and modern world.”²³¹

This nearly universal perspective is displayed in our cultures. Whether in Kato’s Jaba culture which believes in *Kuno* (along with a myriad of other spirits) or in a Western culture which squeamishly avoids a so-called “haunted house,” we all have a viewpoint which is grounded in our cultural worldview. But it seems the African mind has a greater attunement to this subject. For example, the Akan people attest to one peculiar type of spiritual being. Bediako depicts it as following:

Mmoatia are supposed to be mysterious creatures with superhuman powers, that dwell deep in the forest; they are believed to be tiny, with feet that point backwards; suspending themselves from trees, they wait for an unwary hunter in the pitch darkness of the night. At their head, as their spirit, is Sasabonsam with

²³⁰ Ferdinando, Keith. *The Triumph of Christ in African Perspective: A Study of Demonology and Redemption in the African Context*, Page 376. For the Ohio State statistics, Ferdinando cites Bourguignon’s *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*.

²³¹ Stein, Gordon. *The Encyclopedia of the Paranormal*, Page 713.

*bloodshot eyes. His name has found its way in Akan Christian vocabulary to designate the devil.*²³²

And so the Christians of that area sing, “*Sasabonsom*, the evil spirit has troubled hunters for many years...”²³³

In total, Africans have no problem admitting the reality of evil spirits. Concerning the issue of evil, witchcraft, and spirits among the African peoples, Brand accurately comments that “a certain family resemblance” exists, and “even those who deny the existence of an absolutely evil spirit, would not deny that spirits sometimes do evil.”²³⁴ Brand concludes, “In that sense, they all recognise the existence of invisible ‘forces of evil.’”²³⁵

But Africa does not have exclusive rights to the subject, for we can look eastward to Malaysia. Ooi testifies:

*I moved to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah to teach in a seminary more than two years ago. This city is filled with a mixture of indigenous people groups, including Kadazam, Dozon, Murut, etc, and Chinese, as well as Muslim Malay. That many of the indigenous groups are Christians does not mean a total discard of their traditional animistic worldviews and practices. Chinese popular religious practices are common and different gods are worshipped in Kota Kinabalu as in other Chinese communities. Spirit possessions are frequently heard of. And during Chinese New Year season this year, one of my students had a “battle” with the spirit of Guan-yin... a Bodhisava contextualized in Chinese Buddhism, who possessed her elder sister’s body.*²³⁶

Dialoguing from a Chinese perspective, Ooi dwells in a multicultural area of Malaysia, which he depicts as keenly aware of the spiritual forces which are at work. He actually laments that

²³² Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*, Page 10.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Brand, Gerrit. *Speaking of a Fabulous Ghost*, Page 96.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ooi, Samuel Hio-Kee. "A Study of Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare from a Chinese Perspective," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 9.1 (2006), Page 143.

Christianity's presence is often Westernized (which often "dismisses" what he calls the "world of spirits"), and therefore Christianity is not being completely embraced.²³⁷ Ultimately, spirits are a recognized presence in their cultures, demanding a Christian response.

So if nearly every culture has inherent information concerning demonology (or pneumatology), this certainly affects our Christian theology and practice. For not only do the cultures mention spirits and demons, but the Word of God has revealed the true activities and identities of these spirits. We would be callous to ignore (or de-spiritualize and demythologize) the Scriptures and say little, as the world waits for Christianity's answer concerning these cultural norms.

3.3 The Relationship of Demonology and Multiculturalism

We can no longer train, minister, and theologize mono-culturally. While not directly speaking to the emergence of multicultural communities, Tennant recognizes the pressing need, saying:

*In the past, such global exposure and intentional cross-cultural preparation was generally afforded only to those preparing for the missions field, and that often took place in separate degree programs. Today, all of our academic and vocational preparation must train with a deeper sensitivity to the larger global context in which Christian ministry takes place. Christianity has always been a faith for the world. Therefore, even students preparing to pastor white, clapboard churches in the plains of the Midwest or in rural hills of Georgia cannot escape the forces of globalization and religious pluralism they will meet there.*²³⁸

²³⁷ Ibid, Page 144.

²³⁸ Tennant, Timothy C. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, Page 19.

What is true for theology as a complete entity is proper for the sub-discipline of demonology.

Are we prepared to present a biblical demonology which can be simultaneously accessed by our culturally diverse hearers?

Complexity escalates as we consider how demonology should be treated in the multicultural context. From our earlier forays into multiculturalism, we are left with some sincere concerns. Communication and cohesiveness can break down if one culture hegemonically asserts its information above so-called lesser cultures (often being slandered as “primitive.”) Multiculturalism, in the “global village in a local village” sense, cannot survive in this context, and a certain party’s values will inherently dominate, structure, or dictate the diverse whole.

How does demonology enter into the multicultural sphere without splintering the community? Let us begin by avoiding some dead ends. First, the most tempting way to create multicultural harmony is by declaring that every culture is right. This affirming and seemingly friendly route promises multicultural peace, but it fails to deliver any deep or meaningful sense of concord. For when a spiritual or demonic crisis arises, the cacophony of equally “truthful” (yet somehow divergent) voices delivers no help or clarity. One cultural participant may claim that a demonized person should be exorcised, and then another will provide a conflicting remedy. (Meanwhile, a Westerner is urging calm since the person is not actually inhabited by a spirit being.) Who is right? “Everyone” is an appallingly unprofitable (and nonsensical) response. Affirming everyone’s point of view would simply undermine any sense of reality or truth whatsoever. If this avenue is advocated in demonology and beyond, only a truth-less hopelessness could bond the community.

Second, the most ignorant dead end is to issue a moratorium on dialogue concerning the pneumatological realm. Realizing that the diverse opinions on the issue could result in something other than an open and cohesive village, one could potentially seek silence as a remedy. Demonology would be relegated to family discussion or personal musings, but ecclesiological and public discourse concerning spirits would be taboo. But this falls short of truly providing harmony and cohesion, since demonology would only be one of many arenas of disagreement in a multicultural Christian community. Widespread isolation and disintegration would be a presumable outcome, and at least, demonology would be a social force for division rather than union.

Third, the most oppressive response would be for a power culture within the multicultural community to assert its ideas on the whole, manufacturing a forced “harmony.” This would not truly reflect the broader group. Yet, per Nadar’s point about globalization, this is what we are currently experiencing. Globalization is occurring, but it is expanding the influence of Western values and systems, largely at the expense of other cultures’ ideals. (Even the format of this work, prepared according to Western scholarship standards, demonstrates Westernism’s predominance in the global higher education sphere.) Of course, cultures can learn from one another, but strengths and weaknesses are difficult to discern when the one discerning them is culturally conditioned and self-serving. Within the realm of demonology, the imposing influence of Western demythologization has certainly had a negative effect on the other cultural approaches to perceiving and articulating the demonic. However, to attain a harmonious, cohesive, multicultural Christian community, one cultural party (Western or otherwise) cannot insist upon their own ethnic understanding – to the exclusion of others.

The only plausible way forward in addressing demonology in a multicultural context is for a thorough and voluntary agreement of the cultural parties. What do they need to agree on? They must acknowledge that no culture, including their own, is completely or predominantly correct. Once fallibility is recognized, then the stage is set for divine revelation which corrects, instructs, and unites the multicultural village. Only God can utter infallibly concerning reality since God is truth, while every culture offers but a diminished and corrupted quasi-reality. Our finite selves, even amalgamated into cultural entities, do not determine reality; we only express our fallible perception of it. In order for reality to be known, the infinite God must bellow, declaring truth from lie – which is foremost expressed in the Bible and the incarnation of Jesus Christ.²³⁹

Apart from God's truth (the truth which can authoritatively enter into cultural diversity), multicultural humanity will be perpetually trapped within an overt (or at least sub-conscious) struggle for cultural supremacy. But the Word of God can set us free, urging us forward in hope, challenging every culture, and forging in Christ a unity among every cultural background. True multiculturalism is found in biblical supremacy, since, in the words of Hollenweger, the "point of contact between our traditions... is Scripture."²⁴⁰ (Hollenweger is attempting to outline a "truly universal and ecumenical theology."²⁴¹) In the midst of diversity, Scripture is the meeting place, and we might add that it is the only suitable arbiter in disagreement and the only sure guide in crisis. Demonology elicits plenty of disagreement and crisis, and God's Word beckons us all, with our divided backgrounds and conflicting thoughts, to unite in veracious words which

²³⁹ John 14:6. "... it is the conviction of the Evangelist that no one has ever seen the Father: he is simply inaccessible in his transcendence. But it is precisely in this context that the mission and significance of Jesus becomes visible: he is the 'way,' to the Father, and as such the 'truth' and the 'life,' disclosing the divine truth." (Haenchen, Ernst, Robert W. Funk, and Ulrich Busse. *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Hermeneia, Logos Database)

²⁴⁰ Hollenweger, Walter. "Intercultural Theology," *Theology Today*. 43:1, Page 29.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

transcend us. An external divine truth, one which supersedes our immanent cultural “realities,” is the only solution for the demonological, multicultural context.

Before we move toward Kato’s durability in the multicultural arena, we must also acknowledge the subject of cultural theology. Distinguishing between cultural application and cultural theology is necessary. Cultural application is a discipline and art which attempts to translate and contextualize truth into a particular culture. This is valuable and needed, though fraught with danger and confusion in a multicultural scenario. It assumes the biblical worldview, but tries to convey it into cultural terms without altering or corrupting the original message. Cultural theology, as it is defined in this work, pertains to the imposition of cultural priorities and ideas upon the biblical worldview. This redefines the original intentions of the holy text in both insignificant and monumental ways, leaving culture and exegesis as sparring partners in the definition of reality and truth. But cultural theology is frail at best. It not only is bound by culture, but it is bound by time, since every culture is always in flux. A culturalized theology demonstrates its truthlessness by dissolving in time (having not been grounded in an external divine authority) or by floundering outside its culture (since the diverse Christian community does not respect it as a reflection of biblical truth). The multicultural context demonstrates that we need more than a cultural theology; we need a biblical theology which is conveyed and accepted culturally, even as it transforms every culture it enters.

3.4 Byang Kato’s Demonological References and Their Implications for the Multicultural Context

In the earlier section, we detailed the fruitlessness of maintaining a culturally-driven attitude toward demonology in a multicultural Christian community. Rather, to avoid the

dominance or preeminence of one culture, an external arbiter and guide was needed to bridge the divides. God's Word must permeate, oversee, encourage, and chastise God's people. But would Kato's demonology survive such a multicultural scenario? Or as it leaves his Nigerian homeland, does it exist as a culture-laden doctrine which evaporates in other Christian settings? To determine the viability of Kato's pneumatological work in a multicultural community, we must answer two questions. (1) Is it biblical, appealing to an authority which rests outside and above culture? (2) Does it egregiously serve one particular culture, diminishing and disgracing other cultures?

In a multicultural Christian "village," no human rule or cultural background is granted the final say when the Scriptures speak. Every knee equally bows before God, being united under the divine words. God reveals, and humanity yields to the divine reality uttered, which washes and reconstructs our fractured and narrow realities of purely cultural construction. What about Kato? Does his demonology bow the knee, rising above the type of cultural theology which fails to assist the multicultural community? Let us again return to his works (*The Spirits*, *Pitfalls*, and *Other Writings*) to answer the question.

Even before we enter his booklet on *The Spirits*, we are jarred by the title claim that the contents reflect "What the Bible Teaches." And as we move throughout the work, the sheer quantity of biblical quotations overwhelms. With over a hundred direct and indirect biblical citations in a thirty-two page document, Kato certainly intends to represent the Scriptures, and at the outset, no other intentional motive surfaces to undermine that end, in which he would deliberately aim to impose and further his cultural perspective rather than conveying biblical material.

Throughout Kato's demonology, some concerns do arise about its "biblical-ness." First, when Kato quotes Scripture, sometimes it is hasty. For instance, when he quotes Colossians 1:16 as support for God's creation of the spirit world, he glosses over the text, not investigating the meaning of the "thrones and dominions."²⁴² To be fair, this is probably due to the accessibility of the booklet, but the problem still remains. He can be held liable for proof-texting without evidencing a robust exegesis. Second, he assumes a hermeneutical position which treats the biblical information concerning pneumatology as all in agreement. While we may agree with this decision, viewing the Scriptures as a canon which has progressively revealed and clarified the truth throughout history, Kato operates in this manner while giving no explanation for the apparent variations in the biblical material. Third, Kato can also make assumptive leaps. Claiming that "Satan can perform miracles," he mentions the Egyptian magicians from the Exodus narrative.²⁴³ Kato's claim is that diviners, witches, and magicians can be empowered by demonic agents (or they can be frauds), but this Scripture does not explain that link. Assuming that diabolical relationship, Kato presents the text as relevant to the case. We also can see this assumptive method in his mentioning of the "world system" under Satan, which he uses in *Africa under the Cross*.²⁴⁴ Little explanation is provided to frame and support the concept, and we are left wondering how exactly this is Satan's world system and how it operates.

However, if we are to reflect upon Kato's demonological perspective in a broad manner, we must admit that he is generally faithful to the Scriptures, even when it is evidently uncomfortable due to his culture and the culture of his interlocutors. While numerous illustrations could be cited, let us direct our attention to three instances where Kato was

²⁴² Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 5.

²⁴³ Ibid, Pages 22-23.

²⁴⁴ Kato, Byang. "Africa under the Cross" [1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Voice of Kenya at Nairobi Baptist Church, November 16, 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.

unnervingly biblical. First, Kato insists that false gods and idolatry is not another avenue of true worship of the biblical God, and he states that the enemy and his demons are behind these practices. In his critique of Idowu in *Pitfalls*, Kato rejects the idea that “there can be a genuine experience of God in non-Christian religions.”²⁴⁵ The African Traditional Religions (including Jaba religion from his own past) are undermined, as the “Biblical and early Christian approach to idolatry” advocates that false gods and their idols are “the work of the devil.”²⁴⁶ Later, Kato even implies that “enemy forces” are usurping God, stealing worship and glory.²⁴⁷ And in *The Spirits*, the claim is direct and tied to 1 Corinthians 10:19-20, and Kato asserts, “Demons are behind the objects that pagans worship.”²⁴⁸ Though inconvenient and impolite, this position is biblical. Second, Kato’s affirmation of hell (the lake of fire) as a real place and as the final abode of the demonic host (and others) is an uncomfortable yet biblical point.²⁴⁹ Retorting against the hell-less theologies of our time, Kato says, “The Word of God certainly teaches that there is such a thing as hell fire (Matt. 18:9); a place for eternal punishment for Satan, demons, and all unbelievers (Rev. 20:14, 15).”²⁵⁰ Concurring with Kato’s point of view, Unger postulates concerning the doom of the demonic host and its cruel captain:

²⁴⁵ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 125.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, Page 122.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, Page 125.

²⁴⁸ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 24-25. As discussed earlier in 2.4.2, Conzelmann agrees that Paul is intending to prohibit idolatry, for it elevates demons into pseudo-gods. (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.) Lenski adds, “It is a great mistake to image that back of their idolatry and their idol sacrifices there is nothing but an empty vacuity. True enough, as 8:4 makes plain, the gods of the idols have no existence whatever; no being by the name of Jupiter exists, and this is true with respect to all other gods. But something does exist, something that is far more terrible than these pseudo-gods, namely an entire kingdom of darkness which is hostile to God, a host of demons or fallen angels who are ruled by the greatest of their number, namely Satan, Eph. 2:3; 6:12.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, Page 415.)

²⁴⁹ Concerning “biblical,” this means that Kato conveys what the biblical authors intended to communicate.

²⁵⁰ Kato, Byang. “The So-Called Ambassador of World Peace,” *Perception* 2.2 (1975), Pages 1-7.

The abyss lodges its wicked tenants only temporarily, and must at length surrender them to the “eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). This is unquestionably the terrifying doom the demons had in mind when they cried out to Jesus, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Nazarene? Are thou come to destroy us?” (Mark 1:24). “Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matt. 8:29). Satan after being loosed from the abyss, is again apprehended in the midst of his last awful rebellion against God and hurled to his eternal doom into “the lake of fire and brimstone,” to be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). There can be no question that his demon-accomplices, who have aided him in this his last deception of mankind, at this time will suffer the same fate.... Consigned to the eternal flames of Gehenna (Rev. 20:11-15).²⁵¹

Third, Kato opposes all forms of necromancy, to the annoyance of many cultures around the world which value interaction with deceased family members. Christianity and the biblical narrative constantly advocate that we interact with the living, praying to our exalted and resurrected Mediator – Jesus Christ. Consulting the dead is biblically prohibited, as Kato points out, employing Isaiah 8:19.²⁵² Steyne, also alluding to Isaiah, concurs with Kato’s argument and says:

Although many seek to justify this practice (communication with the dead), and some two-thirds world theologians are favorable toward including it in their ethno-theologies, the Bible strongly denounces the practice. Foundational to this practice is the presumed need of a mediator between God and man. It also assumes that a member of the family, though deceased, has a better understanding of family needs and will likely be more concerned and compassionate than a distant God. Such assumptions are total contradictions of the character and person of the God of Israel.... Biblical teaching speaks of God as personal, compassionate, merciful and impartial. He is One Who untiringly

²⁵¹ Unger, Merrill F. *Biblical Demonology*, Page 75.

²⁵² Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 25-26. See section 2.2.1 for additional commentary on this text.

*seeks after man. Isaiah the prophet expresses surprise at the fact, therefore, that Israel should turn from the living God to consult with dead ancestors...*²⁵³

Steyne even advances one step further, stating that the pursuit of the dead is an element of God's judgment. With Isaiah 19:2-3 in view (which outlines God's judgment on Egypt), he states, "But Isaiah points out that resorting to idols and the dead is none other than God's judgment upon them."²⁵⁴ No assistance can be found outside of God, and everything they try will prove to be "nothing."²⁵⁵ Kato's blanket refusal of necromancy appears sturdy, in light of Isaiah's depiction of the practice.

With some serious concerns indicated, the overall tone and content of Kato is bibliocentric. Accounting for the genre and intended audience of his demonology (especially *The Spirits*), he generally grants the Scriptures preeminence. Yet, advancing to address one more issue is necessary, if we are to claim that his work is suitable for the rigors of a multicultural context.

Harkening back to the two questions which commenced this unit, we must ask Kato's demonology the second question whether Kato's demonology advances the agenda and superiority of one culture. "Does it egregiously serve one particular culture, diminishing other cultures?" To answer this question, examining instances where Kato's demonology wades into cultural waters is necessary. But what are we looking for? What culture would he aim to grant dominance? If Kato is interested in elevating one culture, only two substantial options exist.

²⁵³ Steyne, Philip M. *Gods of Power*, Page 218. Clarification added.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ "So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother and each against his neighbor, City against city and kingdom against kingdom. Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and ghosts of the dead And to mediums and spiritists." (Isaiah 19:2-3, NASB.) "The Egyptians will learn that what God plans happens! The Egyptians will search for help and answers from Egyptian idols, speak to the dead, and inquire of fortunetellers, but nothing will help." (Smith, Gary V. *Isaiah 1-39*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

Either he is furthering a Western mindset due to his educational background, or he is furthering a Jaba worldview due to his familial and tribal history. At this point of our study of Kato, neither seems plausible, but with those possibilities in mind, let us proceed to three cases.

In the *The Spirits*, Kato has an entire section labeled as “Christian Attitude.”²⁵⁶ After his biblical exposition concerning the Creator of the spirits, the identity of the spirits, and the activity of the spirits, this inaugurates a practical section of his discourse. Having presented some passing applications in the earlier portions of the work, he articulates a few instances and circumstances in which Christians should use their newfound biblical knowledge in the demonological arena. In this segment, the following subjects are addressed: fortune-tellers, amulets, witches, witchdoctors, dark movies (specifically *The Exorcist*), worshipping or honoring pagan gods, and necromancy.

Throughout this part of Kato’s teaching, he continually decides against cultural norms, but he does this with equality, rejecting both African and Western customs in the hope of adopting a biblical worldview. For instance, he rejects ancestral necromancy (which particularly relates to his African background), and Kato specifically says “Some people feel strongly that African Christians should maintain [contact] with the spirits of the dead.... But this is wrong for Christians to do.”²⁵⁷ Yet he also forbids more Western exercises when he talks about exorcism and demon-themed movies, for Kato declares concerning them, “Stay out of Satanic things.”²⁵⁸ But Kato even transcends these contexts to criticize more universal norms such as fortune-telling (and witch-doctoring). He says:

The Christian should believe in the reality of the world of demons, but should seek no contact with them whatsoever. Many athletes pay a large sum of money to the

²⁵⁶ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 23-27.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, Page 26.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, Page 24.

*fortune-tellers to know the expected results. I was told by a student in one university that at least half of their students consult witch doctors at the time of their examinations. Some students order rings and other objects from India and elsewhere to help them pass examinations.*²⁵⁹

Of course, Kato is dealing in anecdotes here in *The Spirits*, but the conclusion remains that Kato has no overt cultural agenda or allegiance, as he willingly moves against many practices from many cultures. But let us look elsewhere for confirmation.

Kato's work *Theological Trends in Africa Today* speaks to his method and his relationship to culturally-driven theology. Wary of an "African Christianity" which treats cultural and traditional religious input as an equal participant with the Scripture in the theological project (instead of as a linguistic and conceptual vehicle by which Christian teaching may arrive in the language and culture), Kato responds:

*It is questionable whether theology can actually be localized; to localize theology is to overlook the great historical heritage of the Christian faith. It is true that Africans would need to formulate theological concepts in the language of the people of Africa. Varying emphasis may be placed in relevant contents to African situations. But theology as such must be left alone in its essence. The Bible must remain the basic source of Christian theology, with supporting sources of general revelation. Acknowledging general revelation is not the same as equating it with special revelation. It is true that God consciousness can be observed through African religions. But idol worship must not be called God worship.*²⁶⁰

Kato perceives theology as more than a localized phenomenon. The need remains to incarnate special revelation into the local languages (wisely navigating between utilizing or abjuring general revelation terms). But theology should "be left alone in its essence." The goal is to have

²⁵⁹ Ibid, Page 23.

²⁶⁰ Kato, Byang H. "Theological Trends in Africa Today." *Perception* 1.1 (March 1974), Pages 1-9.

one biblical message in many lands, not many separate messages defined by the cultures they enter.

Thus, again, Kato avoids elevating a culture, even in the midst of asserting culture's relevance. With respect to the multicultural context, Kato largely passes the evaluation questions we outlined. His material is generally biblical, and he does not advocate for the supremacy of a particular culture. This sets the stage for a healthy multicultural Christian community, free from cultural domineering, especially concerning the demonic.

3.5 Critique

Although we have demonstrated how Kato's disposition toward pneumatology (and theology in general) is beneficial for the multicultural Christian context, we cannot help but acknowledge that Kato's biblicism (and his relationship with African culture in particular) has garnered him some fierce criticism. In this critique, our goal is to assess Bediako's statement of opposition toward Kato. However, with the emerging multicultural reality in mind, we will address Bediako's concerns, even as we mention a few ways in which Kato could improve in the realm of demonology and multiculturalism.

In *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*, Bediako is analyzing the theological method and response to the introduction of Christianity in Africa. Kato is depicted as an advocate of "radical discontinuity," and Bediako comments:

Basing himself on a radical Biblicism, Kato stressed the distinctiveness of the experience of the Christian Gospel to such an extent that he rejected the positive evaluation of any pre-Christian religious tradition as a distraction from the necessary 'emphasis on Bible truth' (Kato, 1975:169). Kato's insistency on the centrality of the Bible for the theological enterprise in Africa must be reckoned a

*most important contribution to African Christian thought. Yet his outright rejection of the understanding of theology as a synthesis of 'old' and 'new' in a quest for a unified framework for dealing with culturally-rooted questions, meant that Kato's perspective could not provide a sufficient foundation for the tradition of creative theological engagement that the African context seemed to be requiring.*²⁶¹

Before we even enter the multicultural context, we must recognize that this stinging rebuke of Kato is founded upon a misconception of the purpose of *Pitfalls*. Bowers reminds us that “*Pitfalls* should not be taken as Kato's intended paradigm for the theological task awaiting African evangelicalism.”²⁶² Kato was engaged in a “ground-clearing exercise” which precluded problems that would arise in the theological project in Africa. Bowers posits, “For balanced assessment, *Pitfalls* must be viewed within this wider context of Kato's vision for a positive evangelical theological initiative in Africa.”²⁶³ Kato was insisting on biblicism in *Pitfalls* in order that certain errors (universalism, syncretism) could be avoided, and the extended development of contextualization was not the immediate priority. Thankfully, other Evangelicals continued the work which Kato left undone. Bediako alludes to this as well, “Before long, other evangelicals, without denying their commitment to centrality of the Bible for the theological enterprise, were seeking more positive ways whereby the Christian Gospel might encounter African Tradition (Tienou, 1982).”²⁶⁴ We could even say that Kato laid the groundwork for this advancement of Evangelical theology in Africa. So in sum, Bediako's reproof of Kato does not survive an introductory challenge. In the attempt to invalidate Kato, Bediako merely unveils the inadequacy and brevity of Kato's work.

²⁶¹ Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*, Page 55.

²⁶² Bowers, Paul. “Review of Theological Pitfalls in Africa” *Themelios* 5.3 (May 1980), Pages 33-34.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*, Page 55.

However, we introduced the multicultural Christian context into this document concerning demonology, realizing how this increasing presence of communal diversity presents new wrinkles into the theological project. How can we discuss demonology in a multicultural church, seminary, or parachurch organization if the community represents a number of different cultural backgrounds? Though we must admit that Bediako was unaware of this multicultural complexity, the irony of Bediako's rejection of Kato is that Bediako creates a frail sketch of Kato's strengths in a multicultural situation!²⁶⁵ Let us parse this out.

In a multicultural situation, an emphasis on the biblical material itself should be lauded. Bediako declares that Kato exhibits this, calling him a representative of "radical Biblicism." Bediako escalates his rhetoric into an attack saying that Kato did not provide the response "that the African context seemed to be requiring."²⁶⁶ Yet, in a multicultural context, it would be dangerous to prioritize any culture in the theological and ministerial endeavor, especially in the culturally sensitive topic of demonology. While even in a multicultural community the various cultures do speak and set the extremely complex framework of theological discussion on pneumatology, biblicism (including a biblical worldview, a biblical agenda, and biblical emphases) remains the way forward.

So Kato's strengths are evident, but in what ways could Kato improve and better suit the multicultural context with his didactic offerings concerning demonology? The first and primary concern is one of absence, which is surely tied to his brief period of theological production. While *The Spirits* does present a significant effort into the pneumatological field, Kato lacks a sustained academic treatment of demonology. *The Spirits* is more pastoral than theological, and

²⁶⁵ We cannot hold this against Bediako. He is an African, speaking primarily to Africans. The multicultural context is not in view for him, but when the multicultural context is brought to this discussion, it certainly unveils the weakness of contextually-driven theology.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

a more nuanced work, teasing out some of the cultural complexities (both in the Scriptures and in the modern world) is absent. The second and final concern, as stated in 3.4, has to do with hermeneutical assumptions. Not only does this show up in *The Spirits*, but it also crops up elsewhere. In his Master's thesis, he includes how Satan was in the garden.²⁶⁷ While we may agree with this traditional viewpoint due to texts like Revelation 12:9 which call Satan "that ancient serpent," Kato assumes this and other connections without providing biblical backing.²⁶⁸ In a multicultural context which demands biblical perspicuity and centrality, such assumptions could be handled with a more thorough biblical treatment of the subject. Yet, despite this pair of issues, Kato paves a way forward for articulating demonology in a multicultural Christian community – a situation that will continue to present itself as the surge of globalization refuses to relent.

3.6 Conclusion

After an analysis of Kato's demonology, we chose to interact with the norms of the age – globalization and multiculturalism. As the world shrinks through business, immigration, and opportunity, Christianity is increasingly confronted with the opportunity of forming communities

²⁶⁷ Kato, Byang. *Limitations of Natural Revelation*. Dallas Theological Seminary (Master's Thesis, 1971), Page 63.

²⁶⁸ Reading the Scriptures as an intertwined and God-inspired canonical whole, it is difficult to assume any other outcome: the serpent refers to Satan in some sense. Aune comments on Revelation 12:9b, "This phrase begins a short excursus in which the aliases of the dragon are listed. While the woman and the child are neither named nor identified, the author-editor is careful to identify the dragon by listing his traditional names and designations in v9.... Rev 12:9 provides the only explicit biblical identification of Satan with the serpent who tempted Eve in Gen 3:1-7. However, such an identification *may* be presupposed in several other NT passages, such as in Rom 16:20, if the phrase 'crush Satan under your feet' alludes to the 'protevangelium' in Gen 3:15, and perhaps also in Luke 10:19, which links the fall of Satan (seen by Jesus in the vision reported in 10:18) with the ability to tread on serpents (and scorpions).... That John piles up synonyms for Satan suggests that he is consciously attempting to expose the real role of this antagonist of God throughout cosmic and human history." (Aune, David E. *Revelation 6-16*, Pages 696-697.)

(e.g. churches, seminaries, and other organizations) which reflect the diversity of her adherents. But how will we take up the task of teaching and theologizing amidst the many cultures which inhabit such spaces? By what paradigm must we approach demonology, and does Kato assist us?

To properly address these questions, we detailed how connected culture and pneumatology is, with the majority of cultures perceiving the reality of the spirits. African thought (past and present) is particularly attuned to these spiritual concepts. A theological sensitivity to this reality was prescribed, since the Scriptures themselves affirm a worldview which includes such beings.

But what about when many cultures coexist in Christian spaces? This further heightens the need of speakers, pastors, teacher, and others to affirm the biblical contents, not seeking to anoint or champion one particular cultural perspective. Since the Scripture (by the Spirit of God) unites God's people from every background, a demonology which is aware of multiculturalism must emphasize the Holy Writ. The good news is that we found that Kato's demonology, though occasionally flawed and short, is a suitable example of biblicism which both rebukes and affirms aspects of all cultural backgrounds through the exegesis, proclamation, and exaltation of God's word.

4. Byang Kato and the Relationship of Demonology and Soteriology in His Writings

4.1 Introduction

In our previous study and analysis of Kato, we focused on his demonology. We have also highlighted multiculturalism as a means for assessing the strengths of his demonology, even as deficiencies were rendered evident. Yet Kato has repeatedly been upheld for his demonological content and its appropriateness considering the changing world we inhabit.

Throughout the pages that follow, we will recognize the importance that Kato attributes to soteriology. And if Kato views salvation as central, how does demonology serve his soteriology? Should we bear out a similar relationship in our current Evangelical efforts in pneumatology?

4.2 The Parameters of Soteriology

Before we advance any further, we must quickly define the parameters of the soteriological field, within an Evangelical perspective. After a substantial overview of the subject of salvation, the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* states, “It is evident, even from this brief outline, that need would arise for endless analysis, comparison, systematization, and restatement in contemporary terms of all that salvation means to the Christian faith. This is the task of soteriology, the doctrine of *soteria* – salvation.”²⁶⁹ But what does salvation (and soteriology) encompass? White demonstrates some of the “Comprehensiveness of Salvation” with this list of various aspects:

... religious (acceptance with God, forgiveness, reconciliation, sonship, reception of the Spirit, immortality); emotional (strong assurance, peace, courage,

²⁶⁹ White, R. E. O. “Salvation,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Page 969.

*hopefulness, joy); practical (prayer, guidance, discipline, dedication, service); personal (new thoughts, convictions, horizons, motives, satisfactions, self-fulfillment); social (new sense of community with Christians, of compassion toward all, overriding impulse to love as Jesus has loved).*²⁷⁰

Of course, this means little if we do not remember from what we have been saved – “sin and death; guilt and estrangement; ignorance of truth; bondage to habit and vice; fear of demons, of death, of life, of God, of hell; despair of self; alienation from others; pressures of the world; a meaningless life.”²⁷¹ Unfortunately, White’s dictionary deliberation on the nature of salvation and soteriology is unsurprisingly timid about our salvific deliverance from Satan and his demonic powers.²⁷² Thankfully, other academics like Ferdinando are attempting to remedy Evangelicalism’s paucity in this matter, and *The Moody Handbook of Theology* does briefly state that Christ “defeated Satan, rendering him impotent in the believer’s life. Satan had the power of death over people, but that power was broken through Christ (Heb. 2:14).”²⁷³

Accepting the earlier material from White in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* as a supportive contribution to the definition of soteriology, how would we better round this expansive topic in light of our deliverance from Satan? Let us turn to Ferdinando’s *The Triumph of Christ in African Perspective*, wherein he specifically details the demonological aspect of redemption. Under a section entitled “Redemption and Evil Supernatural Beings,” Ferdinando declares:

The notion of Satan’s defeat and of the liberation of his victims is clearly included among the New Testament concepts of redemption. Its Old Testament

²⁷⁰ Ibid, Page 968.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Sadly, this lackluster treatment of demonology in soteriology is not a gigantic surprise in Evangelical circles, especially in the Western world. For instance, Wayne Grudem’s famous tome *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* has twelve chapters on “The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption,” but none target our liberation from demonic powers. The demonic is primarily under “The Doctrine of God,” which includes God’s creation and works.

²⁷³ Enns, Paul. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Page 308.

*background is found in the figure of the divine warrior redeeming his oppressed people by the conquest of their foes (Exod. 15:1ff.).*²⁷⁴

Redemption (and soteriology itself) includes deliverance from the demonic, and Ferdinando expounds on our salvation from Satan's power, mentioning a number of biblical themes which support that argument. First, he points us toward Christ's exorcisms:

*In the synoptic gospels Jesus' exorcisms identify him as the one who brings in the kingdom of God, liberating those oppressed by Satan (Mat. 12:28-29; Mk. 3:27; Lk. 11:20-22; cf. Acts 10:38; Lk. 13:16) and bringing the oppressor's power to an end (Lk. 10:18; Matt. 4:8 & 28:18ff.). However, while the exorcisms, like the healings, show that the kingdom has come in that people are being freed from every sort of affliction, in none of the synoptic gospels do they constitute its substance.... It is not the destruction of demonic activity by overwhelming force that Jesus has primarily come to achieve (cf. Matt. 8:29), but the liberation of Satan's victims from the real, moral source of their enslavement.*²⁷⁵

And Ferdinando expands the demonological outworkings of soteriology, and he ushers us to the cross, stating, "Other New Testament writers however do indicate a relationship between Jesus' death and evil supernatural beings, the Johannine writings and Hebrews having Satan particularly in view, the Pauline epistles and 1 Peter the 'powers...'"²⁷⁶ Ferdinando argues that "there are hints of the divine warrior."²⁷⁷ But he remains steadfast, refusing to remove sin from the heart of the equation. "Thus the object of Christ's death was not primarily the defeat of Satan or of the powers, but the rescue of their victims from their own disobedience and its consequences." And Ferdinando completes this theme at its eschatological resolution.

In their demonology the New Testament writers demonstrate the same eschatological tension which characterizes their understanding of salvation.

²⁷⁴ Ferdinando, Keith. *The Triumph of Christ in African Perspective: A Study of Demonology and Redemption in the African Context*, Page 365.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, Page 366.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

*Satan and the powers are defeated yet remain active while they await final judgment... Moreover there is some suggestion that the same Christ who triumphed over them by his death will also crush them in the climatic act of salvation and judgment (1 Cor. 15:25; Rev. 19:11ff.). The present period between Satan's two judgments is characterized by a tension between Christ's reign and Satan's hostility towards the church.... [Jesus'] reign assures his people of both the security of their salvation and the availability of divine resources in their conflict against hostile powers...*²⁷⁸

Our Savior delivered the demonized and assailed our spiritual enemies with His own death. He is continuing to save, protect, and equip His people, aware of the wily and destructive powers which assault the church, and this soteriological mission will endure until Satan and his host are permanently cast into the lake of fire. Ferdinando rightly unfurls this blanket of doctrines where soteriology and demonology intersect, and his work remedies the shortcomings of the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.

We have a more rigorous definition of soteriology, due to White and the needed assistance of Ferdinando. With that in hand, let us progress by delving into Kato's soteriology, discerning some primary features, especially as they relate to demonology.

4.3 Primary Features of Byang Kato's Soteriology

As we peruse the theological contributions of Kato, what soteriological themes stand prominent? While many abound, what issues pertain to the matter of demonology? Let us acknowledge three primary topics and assess their relationship to Kato's demonology, with the hope of further informing our study.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, Pages 367-368. Clarification added.

First, as we open the pages of *Pitfalls*, we immediately recognize that Kato's concerns about universalism, syncretism, and neo-paganism are all undergirded by salvific tensions. Who is saved? How are they saved? Does salvation exist outside of Christianity, and can African Traditional Religions and other forms of general revelation assist in this, accomplish the task, or empower the process? Toward the conclusion of *Pitfalls*, Kato's concerns well up into a stern rebuke.

*But the devil has many other avenues for fighting against Christ and His church and he knows where best to succeed. Christo-paganism appears to be the area of attack within the next generation... The unique claims of Christ are regarded as eccentricities. The relativity philosophy is seeking to make the Scriptures only one of many revelations rather than a special revelation. Christianity is not repudiated but is given the largest room in the camp of religions. It is claimed that the difference lies not in kind but in qualitative teachings. "Thus saith the Lord" as a prepositional revelation is reduced to merely a segment of general revelation or a fulfillment of other revelations. By this process it cannot dislodge other revelations but only improve upon them. That being the case, salvation is no monopoly of Christianity. It is just as possible to be saved through other religions as it is through Christianity though the latter may bring salvation faster. Such is the kind of thought prevailing today. These are theological pitfalls that only a discerning, Spirit-filled Bible-believer can see and refute.*²⁷⁹

Kato promotes a strict exclusivism; only Christians are the recipients of salvation. As for all the other competitors, "... non-Christian religions prove man has a concept of God but they also show man's rebellion against God (Rom. 1:18-23)."²⁸⁰ Kato articulates that Christ is unique and His ministry is unmatched. "God has redemptively become incarnate in Christ for the redemption of mankind, but only those who accept His offer of salvation can be saved."²⁸¹ "All

²⁷⁹ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Pages 173-174.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, Page 181.

²⁸¹ Ibid, Page 182.

non-Christians belong to one and the same group – unsaved.”²⁸² Kato’s defense against the onslaught of universalism and syncretism is straightforward.

*Launch an aggressive program of evangelism and missions to prevent a fall into the error of the doctrinal strife of third-century Christianity in North Africa (at the expense of evangelism).... Carefully and accurately delineate and concisely express terms of theology as a necessary safeguard against syncretism and universalism.*²⁸³

Thus, exclusivism is a primary feature of Kato’s soteriology, as it plays a significant role in his largest work.

Second, one aspect of soteriology is concerning the transmission of salvation. While the triune Godhead is certainly the author and finisher of salvation, God’s redeemed people are commissioned as agents of reconciliation – proponents of the gospel message. Evangelism is at the core of Jesus’ soteriological purposes, involving the saved in His saving mission among the nations. Tied to Kato’s exclusivism, he urges for clarity and unity in the mission of the Christians in Africa, not being swayed by theological liberalism. He approves of the evangelistic attitude which exuded out of Kampala (the All Africa Conference of Churches in 1963) even while warning elsewhere that this would probably not persist. Kato comments:

*There was no confusion as to the fact that without the Gospel of Christ, Africa was in “darkness of pagan rituals.” This was no abuse of African culture, but an honest admission of the undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ which sees that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Kampala recognized true freedom and liberation.... Instead of compromisingly seeking peaceful coexistence with all religions, Kampala delegates were prepared to lay down their lives for the true gospel of Christ.*²⁸⁴

²⁸² Ibid, Page 183.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, Page 150.

Evangelism, even at great personal cost, is a natural extension of Kato's exclusivism. If Christ and Christianity is only the way to God, then those who cling to their own religious backgrounds are separated from the true God. Therefore, all religions are not equal, and the message about Jesus must be shared in order that "true freedom and liberation" might be attained for the African peoples.

Kato fights against the erosion of evangelism, and he bluntly blames theological liberalism, even citing the devil as its progenitor.

*A strong and growing Christian church in Africa is a fact that cannot be disputed. Various estimates put the Christian population in Africa between 60 and 160 million. But when the church of Christ shines brightest, the devil attacks the fiercest. He works both quietly and violently depending on which approach is most likely to succeed. Today he is trying both methods in Africa. Theological and moral decay have set in. The cancer of liberal, ecumenism is gnawing rapidly into the heart of the church, with many no longer taking the Word of God at face value. A dubious type of cultural revolution has set in.*²⁸⁵

And why would Kato not advocate for evangelism? Evangelism was inherently necessary for Kato himself. He had found no respite from the powers of darkness in his own upbringing. Instead, thankfulness subsumes his response, for he praises God saying, "I thank God I am no longer the Devil's baby but a happy child of God."²⁸⁶

Although many promote "dialogue" and "understanding," Kato argues that "A living Church takes its task of evangelism seriously."²⁸⁷ No one would die for dialogue, but if those without Christ are bound by sin without a Savior, a church which knows freedom would die to share that freedom, as the Apostles did. In the pursuit of evangelizing the nations, Christians

²⁸⁵ Kato, Byang. "Africa's Battle for Biblical Christianity," *Moody Monthly*, (November 1974), Pages 53-56.

²⁸⁶ Kato, Byang. "The Devil's Baby," *Africa Now*. Jan-Mar 1962, Pages 10-11.

²⁸⁷ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 150.

should be willing to forfeit temporary reputations and possessions – even their own lives at the hands of those who are hostile toward Christianity – in order that some might gain eternal salvation. According to Kato’s perspective, anything less than this vision of “evangelism and salvation,” is a submission to “elements of universalism.”²⁸⁸

Third, throughout *The Spirits*, Kato also meanders into the soteriological realm. Kato is exhorting Christians, and he is not seeking to provide an extensive analysis of salvation and its relationship to demonology. But one aspect of salvation concerns God’s ongoing provision and preservation of a holy people in the midst of a demonically dominated world, and Kato does address that, saying:

*The Christian should be well armed by depending on the Lord for victory over Satan and his forces. 'Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil' (Ephesians 6:11). But there is a difference between demonic influence and demon possession. The unbeliever does not have the Holy Spirit of God, and therefore he can be possessed by the demons. The Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Holy Spirit and an evil spirit cannot both dwell in the same body at the same time. The believer may be influenced by an evil spirit, as happened to Paul himself when 'a messenger of Satan' harassed him (2 Corinthians 12:7). But demons cannot possess the body of the Christian.... Thank God, the Holy Spirit of God who is in the Christian is stronger than Satan and his angels who are in the world.... It is wonderful indeed to have Jesus Christ in my life. But it is even more wonderful that Jesus Christ owns me as His child.*²⁸⁹

As an encouragement to Christians, Kato elucidates the delightful consequences of salvation.

While those from other religions (who are without the Spirit of God and the spiritual armor) are under the devil’s dominion, Christians have unique protection from the demonic powers and

²⁸⁸ Ibid, Page 148.

²⁸⁹ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 29-30.

their promotion of evil. We have the armor of God from the sixth chapter of Ephesians, in our battle with the “spiritual powers.”²⁹⁰ Also, according to Kato, by virtue of our new status as God’s child and the residence of the Holy Spirit within us, we are sheltered from complete demonization (which he articulates as “demon-possession”) even though Christians can be highly influenced, bullied, harassed, afflicted, and harangued. However, in Evangelical circles, Kato’s position on this is not without debate, as some do believe that Christians can be internally inhabited.²⁹¹ Yet a concrete consensus arises around the fact that Christians have special advantages and resources in the spiritual war, which burst forth from God’s gracious salvation through Jesus, the Messiah.

4.4 Exclusivism and Byang Kato’s Demonology

Among the themes we highlighted from Kato’s soteriology, all roads seem to lead to exclusivism. Evangelism is an operational extension of exclusivism, and the Christian’s defenses against the demonic are uniquely supplied through Christian salvation. Freedom is found in Christ, while those outside of Christ are bound by sin and its author. But in this section,

²⁹⁰ “From 5:15, the appeal to the readers to conduct themselves in the world in a way that is worthy of their calling has been in terms of living wisely in their household relationships. Now in conclusion, the appeal is for believers to preserve and appropriate all that has been done for their salvation and their conduct by God in Christ, and to do so in the face of evil, seen from the perspective of its ultimate transcendent source. This is not, of course, the language the writer himself uses. Instead he pictures this appropriate Christian living in terms of a battle against cosmic spiritual powers in which believers must put on the armor which God supplies in order to withstand and prevail.” (Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*, Page 430.)

²⁹¹ What does the debate look like? The issue surrounds the use of the words “possessed” and “oppressed,” along with their accompanying system of thought. While a true Christian is certainly “possessed” by God through the redeeming work of Christ and not possessed by an evil spirit, to what level can Christians be affected (and inhabited)? “The problem is that the simplicity of the either/or paradigm (possessed or oppressed) doesn’t fully account for Bible verses that allow for the demonization of Christians. It also doesn’t account for the testimonies of Christian laymen and leaders in North America and around the world whose struggles certainly appear more severe than oppression but that fall short of total demonic control and domination.” (Payne, Karl. *Spiritual Warfare: Christians, Demonization, and Deliverance*, Page 171. Clarification supplied.)

we approach Kato's exclusivist position and ask, "How does this pertain to his demonology, and does it actually shape Kato's demonology?"

Let us detail how Kato's exclusivism intersects with demonology, beginning with *Pitfalls*. Keeping in mind that Kato's stem of exclusivism has many blooms (e.g. Christian evangelism and God's preservation/possession of Christians), demonology inevitably shows up! Kato not only criticizes universalism (and inclusivism), but he states that such beliefs are the plans of the enemy. Kato claims that "the devil has many other avenues for fighting against Christ and His church."²⁹² What does that mean? Kato portrays Satan's work as an attack on the exclusive claims of Christianity and Jesus Himself. Kato holds nothing back, lambasting the arrival of a syncretized "Christo-paganism" which demeans the uniqueness of Christ. Why? He refuses to accept a conclusion which sanctions that "salvation is no monopoly of Christianity."²⁹³ This is Satanic, and Kato will have nothing to do with it. Undermining Christianity's exclusivity is Satan's strategy for retaining his dominion over those in sin and for limiting the incursions of freedom-preaching evangelists.

Evangelism, sharing the saving message of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection, is a critical outworking of Kato's exclusivism, and it is his retort to universalism and syncretism. Though Kato was skeptical about the vagaries of the Kampala conference, we noticed how he treated the subject of evangelism as a necessity.

There was no confusion as to the fact that without the Gospel of Christ, Africa was in "darkness of pagan rituals." This was no abuse of African culture, but an honest admission of the undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ which sees that "the

²⁹² Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 173.

²⁹³ Ibid, Pages 173-174.

*whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Kampala recognized true freedom and liberation...*²⁹⁴

Either Africans were in darkness without the gospel or they were in light with the “undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ.” Evangelism was the bridge between those two states, and the gospel message was the only rescue from “the power of the evil one.”

Kato’s quote of 1 John 5:19b requires some reflection. Kato is portraying a world in moral, spiritual, and religious bondage – under the thumb of a corrosive and manipulative overlord, and from his exclusivist viewpoint, only the gospel of Jesus Christ delivers people from that predicament. But is that what the biblical author intended to convey? Let us reflect on 1 John 5:18-19 itself. “We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”²⁹⁵ The immediate contextual question is “How is one born of God,” and the author answers our query in 5:1, saying, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...”²⁹⁶ Strecker and Attridge remark:

The address is to every Christian, for it is true of all of them that they believe that Jesus is the Christ. Hence nothing is said here directly against any opponents. They are only indirectly in view, to the extent that they deny that Jesus is the Christ.... [the address] confesses Jesus as the Christ and articulates its credo, that is, the fides quae creditur (“that which is believed”) (cf. 4:15).... This attitude of trust is founded on the fact of being born of God, which is the sign by which

²⁹⁴ Ibid, Page 150.

²⁹⁵ NASB. Lenski comments that this text means that the world itself “lies prostrate in [the devil’s] power domain.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*, Page 539. Clarification added.) Also, this text can give the false impression that the “born of God” are perfect, without error. Rather, context (i.e. 1 John 1:10) leads us to read “... no one who is born of God is (actively, continually) sinning.”

²⁹⁶ NASB.

*Christians are known, and which as early as 4:7 was equated with love and with knowing God.*²⁹⁷

Trust in Christ (or lack thereof) is the defining factor as to whether or not one is born of God!

This then carries down into our reading of verses 18-19. Again, we must return to Strecker and Attridge's thoughts on the text.

*...if [Jesus Christ] protects the people who are born of God, the complete thought would be: what is primary for those born of God is their relationship to God. They are "protected" from the evil one by Christ (v. 18). They are thereby separated from the world (v. 19) and have knowledge of the "true God" (v. 20). When Christians know that they are secure under the rule of Christ, they are withdrawn from the sphere of the devil's power. The "evil one" cannot touch them to stain them with sin... It is on the basis of "being from God" that humans can be preserved from the power of the evil one, for such existence is at the same time a matter of being defined by the one who was born of God, that is, Christ.... In v. 19 the dualistic contrast contained in the preceding verse is taken up and interpreted. The difference between God and the devil here corresponds to the alternative between God and the world. When believers are grounded in God they are separated from the world, which "lies under the power of the evil one." This separation is then recognized through faith, with a knowledge that can only be achieved in faith.*²⁹⁸

Let us try to sum up the points here. (1) Those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah are born of God. (2) Those who are born of God are protected from the evil one. (3) A two party distinction exists in 1 John 5. Those who are born of God are with God, and those who are not ("the whole world") are under the power of evil one. With that commentary and summary, Kato is accurate in his representation and application of the text. With 1 John 5 accepted as fact, one would

²⁹⁷ Strecker, Georg, and Harold W. Attridge. *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*. Hermeneia, Logos Database. Clarification added.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. Clarification added.

acquiesce to an exclusivist viewpoint and compassionately seek to evangelize, spreading liberation from the demonic powers of this world.

While the meeting of exclusivism and demonology is richest in *Pitfalls*, Kato's theological adherence to exclusivism also flowers in *The Spirits* and his other writings. Of course, soteriological matters are not at the forefront, but in his conclusion to the booklet, after a command to test the spirits, Kato includes:

Always compare every teaching or practice with Jesus Christ. Some questions you can ask are: Does such practice or teaching recognize that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man? Does it uphold the fact that He was born of a Virgin, died and rose again as the only Saviour of the one who accepts Him? Does it teach that Jesus Christ went up to heaven and that He is now praying for the believers? ... Does it recognize that the wicked may even prosper in this life through their dealings with evil spirits but the day is coming when Jesus Christ will put down all principalities and powers, and become Lord of Lords and King of Kings? Only the teaching that answers these questions positively is in line with God's Word. If you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone to be saved from your sins, be assured that you are now a child of God and that you do not need to fear evil spirits or seek any help from them through magic or charms.²⁹⁹

How exactly does Kato's exclusivism operate here? (1) The correct knowledge about Jesus Christ is absolutely essential for trusting in Him and being rescued from sin. Jesus is not treated as merely one teacher or one god in the pantheon of religious options to mend humanity. Rather, Kato presents Christ as the only Savior who can save us and escort us into the family of God. (2) Jesus alone is sufficient, and no charms or spirits are required as supplements. (3) Kato assumes a two-fold authority system for the world. The world is currently ruled by principalities and powers (used synonymously with evil spirits), and since Jesus Christ is God, He will ultimately return and overthrow the present cosmic order and the various works of the enemy (e.g. magic,

²⁹⁹ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Pages 31-32.

charms, other “dealings”). The only present escape provided from sin and the powers is through “trusting in Jesus Christ.” As we have seen earlier, this strict dichotomy resounds throughout other areas of Kato’s work, such as *Africa under the Cross*.³⁰⁰ (4) In essence, Kato depicts two types of people – those who are saved (and are being saved) by Jesus through faith and those who are not freed from Satan and the powers. The anthropological realm is divided into two camps, and a human’s relationship to Jesus (or lack thereof) is the determining factor concerning one’s relationship with the spiritual world.

Let us analyze one final instance where Kato’s exclusivism and demonology overlap. In 2.2.3, we witnessed Kato’s response to the ecumenical agenda at a meeting in Germany. Kato’s exclusivism was on full display as he said:

*The concept of world unity which includes both the saved and the [unsaved] is not of Christ. The Bible says, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Cor. 6:14-15). If such a unity is not from Christ, it must be from the enemy of Christ.*³⁰¹

Kato is expressing antipathy concerning a pursuit of unity which denies the distinction between those who truly know Christ as Savior and those who do not. He undermines unification efforts by reminding us that we cannot be united with those who bear a different allegiance, on a cosmic level. Again, dividing the world into two groups (the saved and the unsaved, those with Christ

³⁰⁰ “Every individual is a sinner and since individuals make up human structures, those structures are also corrupt. Human effort may and should help improve the society. But the prince of this world Satan is the ruler of this world system. The system awaits God’s final judgement. The believers being saved out of this world system, are called out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (Kato, Byang. “Africa under the Cross” [1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Voice of Kenya at Nairobi Baptist Church, November 16, 1975] in *Byang H. Kato: 1936-1975: Perspectives of an African Theologian: The Writings of Byang H. Kato Th.D.*, ACTEA. Data CD.)

³⁰¹ Kato, Byang. “Ecumenicals - Evangelicals Debate in Germany,” *Perception* 2.1 (1975), Pages 1-8. Clarification added.

and those with Belial), Kato adamantly and exclusively exalts Christ as the sole Redeemer. He later finishes his point by saying:

*Jesus Christ is unique and the only way of salvation. “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” (Jn. 14:6). “Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). To reject Christ is to reject the abundant life, no matter how religious a person may be.*³⁰²

Kato’s exclusivism is not in doubt, and his demonology certainly functions in harmony with it.

But do the biblical texts Kato cites actually support his conclusions in the case of *Ecumenicals - Evangelicals Debate in Germany*?

In the first citation, Kato delivered a quote from 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, and it served to further highlight how the saved and unsaved, those with Christ and those with Belial are diametrically opposed, unsuitable for theological unity. What is the intended meaning? Garland states:

Paul has in mind an alliance with spiritual opposites, and the image of harnessing oneself to someone who is spiritually incompatible evokes images of spiritual disaster. Those who bear Christ’s yoke (Matt 11:30) cannot share it with others who deny Christ. Those who harness themselves together with unbelievers will soon find themselves plowing Satan’s fields. One can only be a true yokefellow (Phil 4:3) with a fellow Christian.... The contrasts in this verse between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, are rooted in Paul’s conviction, stated in 4:4, that “The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” The God of this world (Belial) only spreads darkness by blinding people. Consequently, there can be no harmony between Christ, who is light, and dark Belial. Belial is a Hebrew word... that may mean “worthlessness” (see 1 Sam 25:25), “ruin,”

³⁰² Ibid.

*or “wickedness.” In the intertestamental period it was used as a name for Satan, much as Lucifer was once a popular name for Satan in English.... Paul possibly chose the term Belial because he wanted a personal name as the antithesis of Christ. In 1 Cor 10:20 he warns them that participating in pagan feasts is to share in the worship of demons. Christ and demons do not belong at the same table.*³⁰³

Paul is chiding the Corinthian Christians, in order that they might be holy and separate in a pagan society. The danger persists that many Christians may remain joined with unbelievers in idolatrous and sinful causes, and such unions exhibit allegiances to the wrong parties, rather than to Christ. Paul leaves no room for middle ground. The pagan world rejects Jesus (in whole or in part) and dwells in darkness, and humanity is divided between two personalities, two lords – Jesus or Belial (Satan). Kato does not manipulate this intention. Rather he harnesses it, rightly inserting it into the ecumenical discussion. A desire for unity should only progress so far, for it can only be truly found in Christ. Salvation is through Jesus Christ, and the division between those who believe in Him alone and those who do not is pronounced. Again, Kato’s exclusivism appears to be grounded in exegesis.

The second quotation that supports Kato’s counter-ecumenism rhetoric is from John 14:6. Kato is insisting that Jesus is “unique” and that He alone saves. Borchert backs Kato’s assertions.

Here John joins three powerful ideas of “way,” “truth,” and “life” to produce a classic statement concerning the significance of Jesus in providing salvation.... The concepts of these three terms are rooted solidly in the teaching of the Old Testament and in Hebrew thought.... For example, the Psalmist prays that the Lord would teach him the divine “way” and lead him to walk in “truth” (Ps 84:11), and he contemplates the “path of life” (Ps 16:11) as his blessed hope.... Moreover, here at 14:6 John follows the lead of the Prologue, where he already

³⁰³ Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

had asserted strongly that no one else has ever seen God, but the only Son has made him known (1:18). Now in this verse John concludes with an emphatic assertion (“No one comes to the Father except through me”)... Any hint at universalism, syncretistic patterns of salvation, or reaching the Father through any other means than Jesus is here completely eliminated. The issue of Johannine exclusivism is therefore placed squarely before the reader. Given the fact that the Johannine church was a community struggling for its existence in the midst of powerful pressures from both its Jewish birthing setting and its Hellenistic syncretistic context, the language and antisociety stance may seem to be completely out of touch with today’s adoption of pluralism.... The Johannine concept of mission is uncompromising on the issue of the uniqueness of Jesus. For this assertion they were willing to die or be excluded from the synagogues in the pattern of the blind man (9:34).³⁰⁴

In fact, Borchert portrays John’s exclusivism as virtually impossible to avoid. Jesus, picking up on Old Testament themes, portrays Himself as the full and final declaration of those truths in the flesh. Jesus has a unique relationship with the Father, and therefore, He alone is the bearer and dispenser of life-saturated, truth-teaching salvation. Borchert even attentively expounds on the context of John’s gospel, pointing out that the Christologically exclusive nature of salvation led believers to run contrary to the predominant forms of religiosity of that time.

In Kato’s defense of exclusivism, wherein salvation is established in Christ alone while all other paths stand under the powerful influence of the devil, the final quotation employed by Kato is Acts 4:12. Polhill summarizes the dramatic conclusion to Peter’s oration of defense.

All Peter’s sermons to this point ended with an appeal, but there seems to be none here. The appeal, however, is present implicitly. If there is salvation in no other name (v. 12), then obviously one must make a commitment to that sole name that brings salvation. But the appeal is even stronger than that. Peter switched to the first person at the end of the verse, “by which we must be saved,” amounting to a

³⁰⁴ Borchert, Gerald L. *John 12-21*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification added.

*direct appeal to the Sanhedrin.... They asked for the name in whom his authority rested. He answered their question. It was the name, the power of Jesus.... The Council had rejected the one who bore this powerful name. The ultimate verdict rested with them. Would they continue to reject the one whom God had placed as the final stone for his people, the only name under heaven in which they would find their own salvation? The final verdict would rest in their own decision.*³⁰⁵

In the presence of a council filled with men who had sincerely held beliefs concerning human existence and religion, Peter was bold. Asserting that salvation was only in Jesus Christ, his message inherently relegates the other religious options, and Peter beckons each member to turn to Jesus. Instead of coalescing to societal demands to conform or accommodate, the apostles stood firm on this doctrine, and Christians would eventually perish promoting Jesus (e.g. Stephen in Acts 7 and James in Acts 12.) Kato's statement which said "To reject Christ is to reject the abundant life, no matter how religious a person may be" appears to be merited, and his reasoning vindicated. Kato accurately maintains a soteriological exclusivism which is rooted in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and his demonology correctly leads him to label Christlessness as the dominion of humanity's ancient enemy - Satan.

4.5 Critique

In our study of the relationship of Kato's demonology and soteriology, we have arrived at a few conclusions so far. First, we recognized that while Kato's soteriology could merit a much larger exposition, exclusivism (and the features that spring from it – evangelism and protection) was prominent. Second, we observed that Kato's demonology repeatedly intersected with and informed his exclusivism, being upheld by the text of Scripture itself. But what revision is necessary?

³⁰⁵ Polhill, John B. *Acts*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

Beginning with Kato's exclusivism, what problem arises? One of the strongest instances of Kato's exclusivism is in his "ten point proposal" for "safeguarding biblical Christianity in Africa" at the end of *Pitfalls*.³⁰⁶ He is firm in his tone and vocabulary as he declares "All non-Christians belong to one and the same group – unsaved."³⁰⁷ As articulated earlier, Kato prescribes a fervent Christian response to the storm of universalism and syncretism, and he says, "Launch an aggressive program of evangelism and missions to prevent a fall into the error of the doctrinal strife of third-century Christianity in North Africa (at the expense of evangelism)."³⁰⁸ While no content issues are apparent since his exclusivism is grounded in the Bible, discernment does lead us to reconsider his tone. In general and in specific instances (e.g. "aggressive"), Kato's exclusivism would pair well with a note of compassion. Our response to the demonic powers themselves merits a strong combative language, but those who unknowingly languish under the domain of Satan and his minions are not to be assailed with militant rhetoric. Rather, evangelism and missions is motivated and empowered with compassion, as modeled by Christ. When Jesus evangelized among the crowds, healed the sick, delivered the demonized, and faced accusations of being demonized Himself, He exhibited compassion.

*Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."*³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Pages 181-184.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, Page 183.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Matthew 9:36-38, NASB. "From the work of Jesus, Matthew takes us to the motive that lay back of all this work, the Lord's great compassion." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, Page 382.)

Of course, Kato was entrenched in the midst of a theological battle, but when compared to the initial evangelistic efforts of Jesus and the disciples, Kato's compassion is not as transparent. Blomberg portrays Jesus' missional attitude, saying, "Despite Jesus' extensive ministry, many in Israel, no doubt even in Galilee, remain unreached with his message. Jesus' human emotions reflect a deep, *gut level* 'compassion' ... for this sea of humanity."³¹⁰ The religious and national leadership had failed the masses, and Jesus was motivated by compassion. But He was not aiming to act alone. "The unreached people of his world need more preachers and ministers of the gospel. Jesus can personally encounter only a small number, so he will commission his followers to begin to reach the rest."³¹¹ Jesus' disciples would be personally involved in the compassionate ministry of the kingdom, and Jesus' sending activity culminates at the Great Commission – the conclusion to Matthew's epistle. Thus, while Kato's exclusivism should be accepted, perhaps we could reframe its evangelistic outflow in a more compassionate tone. May we have a heartfelt affection which pours out the gospel and service before those who are wounded and weary, bound in Satan's fetters of sin.

But what should we recast about Kato's demonology and how it interplays with his exclusivism? As we have seen, especially through his citation of 1 John 5:19, Kato uncomfortably yet faithfully integrates the Satan into his soteriological conversation, painting Satan and his underlings as the personal agents who oversee the world. Kato perceives that it is an "honest admission" to voice that "the whole world lies in power of the evil one (1 John 5:19)," requiring the gospel which brings "true freedom and liberation."³¹² However, while Kato is correct, the potential for misunderstanding could be more closely monitored. Those who do not grasp the Scriptures which undergird such statements could interpret Kato as vicious,

³¹⁰ Blomberg, Craig. L. *Matthew*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 150.

demonizing and slandering those who occupy opposing sidelines in the conversation. But further explanation concerning the relationship of the evil powers to those apart from Christ could either rectify the misunderstanding or aggravate the offense. So while Kato's demonological language in his exclusivism might elicit confusion and hostility, discerning a pragmatic remedy appears difficult, lest we blunt the biblical language that he used. If we are truly absorbed in relaying the Scriptures, it would be unwise to excise demonological references from Evangelical discourse.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we continued our analysis of Kato's demonology by honing our discussion to the particular field of soteriology and its connection to demonology. While defining the scope and content of soteriology, we discovered that it is a broad category, which includes both what we are redeemed *from* and what we are saved *to*. Thanks to the theological contributions of Ferdinando, Satan (along with his associates) was mentioned as someone from whose power we are delivered, through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

As we progressed to Kato in particular, we teased out three features of Kato's soteriology, and each one drew us toward Kato's persistent theme of exclusivism. Christ is unique, and He alone can save. Salvation is only found in Him, and all other spiritual allegiances are without hope, under the power of the enemy. We are therefore called to evangelize the lost, beckoning others to experience the gracious deliverance and protection of our Savior.

We continued by assessing the relationship of Kato's demonology to his exclusivism. Not only was the demonic mentioned, but with a number of biblical quotes, Kato portrayed Satan as the antagonist who dominates and enslaves the world, opposing Christ and His salvation. Yet,

when we offered a critique, we questioned Kato's tone even as we refused to challenge his content, since Kato's use of the scriptural passages was sound.

We started this work with an introduction, along with a background of Kato. Plunging into the heart of Kato's demonology, we also discussed his demonology's ties to the fields of multiculturalism and soteriology. But now, let us glean from Kato's strengths and learn from his weaknesses, articulating a fresh Evangelical demonology which retells the biblical doctrines in our multicultural age.

5. Toward an Evangelical Theology of the Demonic

5.1 Introduction

The Sabbath day in Capernaum probably began as usual. The synagogue was populated by the inhabitants of northern Galilee, and the Torah was read. But the crowd was astonished by the authoritative ministry of a new teacher, Jesus. A man “with an unclean spirit” screamed, interrupting the religious proceedings with vitriol. “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God.”³¹³ Mark reports this scene early in his gospel concerning the Christ, and we are left burgeoning with curiosity. What just happened? What is an unclean spirit (or a demon, since Mark uses those terms interchangeably)?³¹⁴

Any serious student of the Scriptures has experienced questions or wonder after beholding the spectacle of these spiritual confrontations. Mark is only the beginning, for Job, Zechariah, Luke, Ephesians, Revelation, and other portions of the Holy Writ elicit queries concerning supernatural beings of a despicable quality. The demonic is not peripheral and inconsequential; it is a prominent opponent of the divine Protagonist of the redemption narrative.

The biblical inclusion of exorcisms and other demonic encounters are not without purpose. In the case of Mark 1, a demon is chosen to supply an initial testimony concerning the Messiah. Guelich explains the demonic outburst saying, “... this announcement shows the demon’s awareness of who Jesus is and that Jesus is His superior... In so doing he identifies

³¹³ Mark 1:21-24. “The demon addresses Jesus as ‘Jesus, the Nazarene.’ After asking about the purpose of Jesus’ coming, the spirit then demonstrates his knowledge of Jesus’ true identity, ‘The Holy One of God.’” (Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26, Volume 34A*, Page 57.)

³¹⁴ “‘The unclean spirits’... represents a common Jewish designation for demons... The two expressions appear synonymously in Mark (3:30 cf. 3:22; 7:25 cf. 7:26, 29, 30)...” (Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26, Volume 34A*, Page 56.)

Jesus for Mark's audience or reader."³¹⁵ We cannot gloss over what is integral to the argumentation of Scripture.

Yet humanity's questions about the demonic are not only sourced in sacred text, they well up from the pages of daily life and the cultural volumes that flood our world. How should we understand the demonic in the Bible? By what framework should we categorize the spiritual dynamics which occur in our homes, our churches, and our nations?

Throughout this work, we have labored over the life and the theological contributions of Kato. After assessing his demonology, we evaluated it in light of the growing multicultural norm throughout our world, and we framed the close relationship between his demonology and his soteriology. Having deemed his efforts fruitful, Kato will guide us in this demonological project. Therefore, let us journey together, searching the Word of God and thinking carefully as we synthesize an Evangelical demonology with the insight of Kato and others.

5.2 Contributions from Byang Kato's Demonological Perspective

The task ahead is to articulate a fresh Evangelical demonology. But lest our study of Kato has been tilled in vain, we must harvest theological contributions which spring from his unique perspective and biblical perspicuity. Having analyzed Kato's demonology along with its relationship to multiculturalism and soteriology, many of Kato's contributions could be recapitulated. Here are three that merit special consideration as we endeavor to construct doctrine on the demonic.

First, the ontological distinction between God and the spirits is vital. While Satan has power as the natural ruler of rebellious humanity, Kato in no way wishes to affirm a dualism

³¹⁵ Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26, Volume 34A*, Page 57.

which portrays God and Satan as equals who battle for supremacy in the created realm. Rather, Kato states:

*God as Spirit is absolutely different from all other classes of spirits. He is the Creator. Every aspect of His character is infinite; that is, without limit or comparison. He alone knows everything. He also can do everything that is not against His nature. God alone can be everywhere at the same time So in our dealing with the origin of spirits, we must exclude God. Although He too is Spirit, He is the uncreated Spirit since He Himself did the creating. All other spirits are created beings.*³¹⁶

With references to Psalm 148 and Colossians 1 in view, Kato elaborates on the created quality of the spirits, which includes the demonic.³¹⁷ The Creator/creature distinction is infinitely wide, and Kato does not elevate a spirit to the level of the Spirit.³¹⁸

Kato's emphasis is well received. As he presented it at the outset of his booklet on the spirits, we too must consider creation itself as we stare at the darkness. If we lose sight of the Creator, we may be tempted to reckon the demonic as more powerful than it is. Only the knowledge of the true God with His infinite attributes and His incarnate exploits can properly ground us for the demonological endeavor.

³¹⁶ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 4.

³¹⁷ "Concerning God's word in the heavens... the psalmist moved from highest to lowest, starting with the heights (v. 1), the 'third heaven' where God dwells (2 Co 12:2) and which is also inhabited by His angels (explained as His hosts in v. 2)... All that fills these three heavens are obligated to praise God because He created and established them." (*The Moody Bible Commentary*, Page 879.) "All things have been created in [Jesus Christ], that is, through him. The fullness of what 'all things'... means is depicted more exactly by the addition: everything that is in the heavens and on earth. There are no exceptions here, all things visible and invisible are included. Even the cosmic powers and principalities were created in him.... In such enumerations it does not matter whether the list is complete or whether the angelic powers are arranged in the order of their particular classes. The emphasis is rather that all things that exist in the cosmos were created in Christ. Thus he is Lord of the powers and principalities (cf. 2:10, 15; Eph 1:21; 1 Pt 3:22)." (Lohse, Eduard. *Colossians and Philemon: A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Hermeneia, Logos Database. Clarification supplied.)

³¹⁸ For more on this, see sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.

Second, Kato's biblicism rebukes every cultural perspective on demonology, even while affirming aspects of them. On the level of intention, no particular culture is treated as superior, and this attitude paves a path toward unified multicultural Christian communities. Since the point of contact and cohesion in such situations is the Scriptures, Kato's insistence on the Word of God, even to the repudiation of cultural norms, is a strength worth replicating, especially as the ongoing expansion of urbanization and globalization force us to look beyond monocultural theologizing. Kato asserts:

*It is questionable whether theology can actually be localized; to localize theology is to overlook the great historical heritage of the Christian faith. It is true that Africans would need to formulate theological concepts in the language of the people of Africa. Varying emphasis may be placed in relevant contents to African situations. But theology as such must be left alone in its essence. The Bible must remain the basic source of Christian theology, with supporting sources of general revelation. Acknowledging general revelation is not the same as equating it with special revelation. It is true that God consciousness can be observed through African religions. But idol worship must not be called God worship.*³¹⁹

Without multiculturalism in view, Kato does allow that theology (and demonology) will look differently as it is articulated in an African manner, answering African questions (assuming a monocultural community). Yet, the Bible is foremost, and Kato's demonology reflects that. Thus, Kato's teachings on the demonic (e.g. *The Spirits*) are suitable for more than only the African context since they are focused on the Word of God. We too shall aim for biblicism, not only because we wish to exalt special revelation above general revelation, but because this best suits the increasingly multicultural world we inhabit.

³¹⁹ Kato, Byang H. "Theological Trends in Africa Today." *Perception* 1.1 (March 1974), Pages 1-9. Further comments on this quote can be found in section 3.4.

Third, Kato reminds us that demonology and soteriology are interrelated.³²⁰ (Specifically, throughout Kato’s demonology, the topic of exclusivism frequently recurs.) One of the strongest points of intersection of Kato’s demonology and soteriology is in the midst of his vigorous defense of evangelism as defined at Kampala, for he declares:

*There was no confusion as to the fact that without the Gospel of Christ, Africa was in “darkness of pagan rituals.” This was no abuse of African culture, but an honest admission of the undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ which sees that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Kampala recognized true freedom and liberation.... Instead of compromisingly seeking peaceful coexistence with all religions, Kampala delegates were prepared to lay down their lives for the true gospel of Christ.*³²¹

The strength, character, and authority of the “evil one” are relevant because that information helps define redemption itself. The gospel has a different tune when we incorporate our deliverance from demonic powers and the dominion of darkness. The news of an evil one also impresses upon Christ’s servants the peril of the lost.

Having brought forward three contributions from Kato which will be instilled into our broader study of the demonic, let us “set the table,” so to speak, in order that we may feast on God’s Word as we ponder the demonic.

5.3 The Criteria for an Evangelical Demonology

Any theological composition demands criteria. Why? It would be easy to blurt out pages of words strung together, and when reaching the end, we could uncritically declare, “That sounds good to me.” But personal approval is not a suitable standard for discerning the veracity of a

³²⁰ See section 4.2 for a discussion on the parameters of soteriology.

³²¹ Kato, Byang. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Page 150. See sections 4.3 and 4.4 for additional treatment of this quotation.

theological work! Consider this basic example: one person is born liking a particular food, yet he changes his mind concerning it throughout his lifetime. How then could we expect fleeting personal approval to judge accurately and concretely concerning truth, specifically concerning the demonic?

Too often, we can fall prey to poor criteria. What are some measures that we should avoid? While certainly not an exhaustive list, here are three in particular. First, linked to the false end of personal approval, we must refuse communal approval as a false criterion for demonological study. The masses cannot and do not determine what is right and true, for the opinions of cultures and communities often sway and shift with the winds of time. Popular opinion does not provide a steady standard by which we could measure the cogency of a theological teaching. Second, pragmatism is an unsuitable criterion for our treatment of demonology. While we are often bombarded with the attitude of “Do whatever works,” the practical outworking of a particular dogma does not properly verify the doctrine itself. Orthodoxy should guide orthopraxy, not vice versa. Third, our demonology should not be evaluated based on reason alone. Theology should be reasonable, but it is not purely reason. Rather, reason (or naturalistic logic) should be wielded in service to divine revelation, and this may result in seemingly unreasonable, non-naturalistic conclusions (i.e. affirming the virgin birth in Christology). A naturalistic standard or criterion for pondering the demonic, a decidedly non-naturalistic field, would be an intellectual handicap. But since these are poor criteria, what then shall we employ for the pages ahead?

5.3.1 Biblical Centrality

The revelation of God through the Old and New Testaments must be the first and primary standard for assessing the reliability of the following work on demonology. The Bible voices divine words concerning reality, and it frames the world as we should understand it. It alone avoids the excesses and dismissals of competing cultural positions concerning the demonic.

Unger argues:

*In no sphere is this fidelity to reality and verity more advantageously displayed than in the domain dealing with demonological phenomena, wherein distortion and extravagance are elsewhere so notoriously rampant. Whether it be a matter of the revelation of basic demonological truth, or the appraisal of varied demonological phenomena, or the complex description of a people under the paralyzing power of evil supernaturalism, the Bible's unerring criteria are absolutely trustworthy. The character of Biblical demonology itself, as clear and unerringly recorded truth, qualifies it as a wholly reliable standard of evaluation in appraising the character of demonology in general...*³²²

While we are less interested in evaluating other demonologies and more committed to the construction of our own, Unger, along with the Word of God itself, reminds us that the Scriptures alone are the suitable starting place for demonological thought.

Why would divine revelation be so reliable and necessary for the project of demonology? Let us outline three strengths which set apart the Holy Writ as essential for theologizing concerning the demonic.

First, the Scriptures, which are “breathed out by God,” claim to speak for the Creator.³²³ The triune God of the Bible does not merely claim divinity; revelation attests that He, through

³²² Unger, Merrill F. *Biblical Demonology*, Page 21.

³²³ While a complete defense of the perfection and divine nature of Scripture is not the purpose of our efforts, a brief comment is merited. Paul refers to “all Scripture” as being “God-breathed” in 2 Timothy 3:16, and his word choice is pregnant with meaning. Lea and Griffin elucidate, “The idea the term

Jesus Christ, is the Creator of all things. A number of texts could be cited, but John 1:3 is direct - “All things came into being through Him (the Word, Jesus Christ), and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”³²⁴ Everything that exists was created by the biblical God. This verse and its phrasing (especially with the inclusion of the word “nothing”) “emphasizes the involvement of the Logos in the bringing into being all of reality except the uncreated reality of God.”³²⁵ But why does God’s Creator identity matter?

The owner of a car might be able to testify concerning the vehicle’s qualities. But surely, if we wish to apprehend the fullness of the car’s purpose and abilities, we would aim to consult the maker, the designer, the creator of the vehicle. At least, we would consult a technical manual provided by the manufacturer. In a similar fashion, the Creator of all that exists is the authority on reality itself. While the observation of creation may be helpful, shall we not prioritize the consultation of the Creator, who imbued the world and its inhabitants with purpose and life? We must seek Jesus and His revelation to us concerning the demonic.

Did God create the demonic realm? Though the angels are mentioned in Psalm 148:1-6, the biblical text never says “God created demons.”³²⁶ Yet, by the Johannine gospel, we assert

presents is that God has breathed his character into Scripture so that it is inherently inspired. Paul was not asserting that the Scriptures are inspiring in that they breathe information about God into us, even though the statement is true. The Scriptures owe their origin and distinctiveness to God himself. This is the abiding character of Scripture.” (Lea, Thomas D., and Hayne P. Griffin. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³²⁴ NASB. “‘All things came into being’ since the beginning, the Logos through whom they were called into being existed before the beginning, from eternity.... The Son is from all eternity ‘the uncreated Word.’” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel*, Pages 36-37.)

³²⁵ Borchert, Gerald L. *John*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. This sets us against Bultmann’s interpretation of this verse and in agreement with Haenchen, Funk, and Busse’s critique of Bultmann’s error (Bultmann claimed that the Logos was only responsible for the “world of men.”) (Haenchen, Ernst, Robert Walter Funk, and Ulrich Busse. *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

³²⁶ “... the psalmist calls upon all heavenly creatures to praise Yahweh.... These verses (verse 5-6) give the reason for the command to praise Yahweh: all things and beings in the realms above were created by his command, and so they are his creatures, his servants.” (Bratcher, Robert G., and William D. Reayburn.

that nothing exists apart from His original creative work. Because demons are inherently creation (or more precisely, the corruption thereof), the Creator's perspective on reality, revealed through the Scriptures, is paramount.

Second, if the biblical literature is accepted, demons are finite, supernatural spirits which operate differently than humans. Although humans are also spiritual beings, we do not function only as spirits, since we are also creatures of flesh. This is a problem! For a moment, may we suppose a fish, which has never been anything except a fish, wished to think critically about the experience of a bird breathing oxygen. It could hardly expect to ascertain a proper analysis from its uninformed perspective. Yes, some similarities exist since the fish processes oxygen via its gills, but would not the fish's study fall inadequately short if it failed to rest upon the counsel of a being which breathes oxygen in a similar manner to a bird? In keeping with this fictitious example, perhaps the fish could even consult a bird directly.

To critically analyze the subject of the spirits, we require communication with a supernatural spirit. Who of the spirits should we believe? The infinite Spirit, the Creator God should be our first recourse, and the divine Being prohibits all other forms of divination (seeking occult knowledge from other spirits). Through Scripture, God can utter concerning what seems alien to us. A supernatural subject – the demonic – deserves a supernatural explanation.

Third, hand in hand with the earlier two points, humanity is a flawed and egotistical evaluator. As in, without reproof and accountability, we regularly think in a manner which inflates and advances our self-importance. The temptation to let this attitude seep into our demonology is strong, preferring to proffer a demonic which is manageable and easily comprehensible. Human sentiment, pride, and pragmatism can all interfere.

A Handbook on Psalms. UBS Old Testament Handbook Series, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification added.)

Instead, Scripture scrapes away the debris which clutters our consideration of the demonic. Biblical clarity cures our simplicities and extravagancies, instructing us concerning a divine outlook which confounds our evaluatory expectations. Eschewing a bold self-reliance on our weak human intuition and intellectual capacity, we turn to the God of all truth, knowledge, and wisdom. The Bible and its message concerning the demonic must be the primary criterion for our work.

5.3.2 Hermeneutical Consistency

If we wish to grant the Scriptures the primary role in our demonology, we must then ask, “Which interpretation of it?” Consider how hosts of men and women encountered Jesus of Nazareth and left with various impressions and interpretations of His role and identity. Mark records:

*Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” They told Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.” And He continued by questioning them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”*³²⁷

If the exact representation of God’s nature in human flesh, the Messiah who had come to bless the nations of the Earth, could be misunderstood and misinterpreted with such ease, should we not expect for the revealed words of God – the Bible – to spark a variety of positions and opinions? Thus, the annals of history are replete with competing ideas concerning the divine library of sixty-six books. The demonic has garnered the same diversity of opinions. (This has

³²⁷ Mark 8:27-29, NASB. “God himself had declared Jesus to be his Son (1:11; cf. 9:7), with the demonic world chiming in with fearful acknowledgement (1:24; 3:11; 5:7). But now Jesus is interested in ascertaining human opinion, that of the general public and then that of his own disciples.” (Evans, Craig A. *Mark 8:27-16:20*, Page 14.)

provoked the composition of comparative works like *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*.³²⁸)

But how do we know who has offered a sound interpretation of demonological phenomena from Scripture? Hermeneutical standards are a critical criterion for evaluating any claim that is sourced from biblical revelation. With that as a stated priority, let us propose a few hermeneutical necessities which pertain to demonology, in order that this teaching on the demonic may be consistent with the Scriptures.

First, in developing a hermeneutical consistency which reflects the biblical material, a progressive perspective toward revelation should be cultivated. The Bible was not composed and compiled overnight. While the New Testament documents were penned in a fairly short period of time, the divulging of the Old Testament from the divine mind was a substantial process, at least from our finite, chronological perspective. Grudem says, “This collection of absolutely authoritative words from God grew in size throughout the time of Israel’s history.”³²⁹ The content of the Bible gradually increased, and the redemptive plot of the overarching narrative, along with the worldview it espoused, advanced.

As the triune character of God is not immediately or fully expounded by the early volumes of Scripture, we should not anticipate the divine revelation to articulate an immediately complete treatment of the demonic by the first book of the canon. As revelation slowly accumulated, the demonic is progressively disclosed, especially through the surprising entrance of the incarnate Christ and His victorious accomplishments. With the Messiah’s coming, interactions that once occurred in heavenly places (Job 1-2) began to occur on Earth (Matthew 4). The Bible reflects this escalation, from the cryptic serpent in the garden to the unmasked

³²⁸ The book was edited by Beilby and Eddy.

³²⁹ Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Page 55.

dragon in the third heaven, “the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan.”³³⁰ While biblical harmony exists concerning the demonic, the text provides progressive clarity instead of strict continuity, due to the nature of unfolding revelation.

Second, another hermeneutical point that demands consistency is concerning the original intention of the text. While opinions are freely held by many on a range of biblical topics (including demonology), these opinions do not and should not override the authorial intentions of the texts themselves.

Sadly, unusual and perplexing ideas concerning the demonic have cropped up, with little affinity with what the Bible originally intended to convey. For instance, Barth offers a peculiar doctrine on the demonic, saying:

*What is the origin and nature of the devil and demons? The only possible answer is that their origin and nature lie in nothingness.... As we cannot deny the peculiar existence of nothingness, we cannot deny their existence. They are null and void, but they are not nothing.... God has not created them, and therefore they are not creaturely.... They are nothingness in its dynamic, to the extent that it has form and power and movement and activity. This is how Holy Scripture understands this alien element.*³³¹

A cursory reading of Barth’s vision of the demonic can discern that his assessment does not match the tone and tenor of the biblical narrative. Lest our treatment of Barth be labeled as a disrespectful, Bromiley specifically mentions Barth’s weakness in this realm with the following warning: “Unfortunately [Barth] does not back up the objection with any direct biblical material.... Yet he... lays himself open to criticism at a vital point: Is he really obeying scripture

³³⁰ Revelation 12:9, NASB. “That ancient serpent: this is a reference to the Devil as the snake in the Garden of Eden...” (Bratcher, Robert G., and Howard. A. Hatton. *A Handbook on the Revelation to John*. UBS New Testament Handbook Series, PC Study Bible Database.)

³³¹ Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*, III, 3, Page 523.

as the criterion of dogmatic purity and truth?”³³² Even though Barth claims the Bible (and wields it effectively in many subjects), we must question, on this point, if he understands the intention of the biblical authors, for the concept of nothingness appears to be wholly extra-biblical.³³³ Therefore, we should be critical and self-reflective, in order that philosophies and personal opinions are avoided and weeded out. But how should we aim for the intention of the authors?

Third, to ascertain the original intention of text, further biblical studies on the subject should breathe interpretive wisdom into any issues which arise. The context of Scripture itself is crucial, especially within the same pericope, book, and human author, and thankfully, since we understand the entire Bible to have a singular divine Composer, we can discover guidance from every book. Zuck highlights the importance of context with an example:

*Understanding a word or sentence in its context is another aspect of normal interpretation, of how we normally and usually approach any written material. A single work or even a sentence may have several meanings depending on the context in which it is used. The word trunk may mean a part of a tree, the proboscis of an elephant, a compartment at the rear of a car, a piece of luggage... Obviously it cannot mean all these things or even several of them at once in a single usage. The reader can determine its meaning based on how it is used in the sentence.*³³⁴

Of course, confusion between a tree and a piece of luggage is usually more humorous than perilous. But when we are dealing with the Word of God, confusion does not elicit laughter, even as we consider demonology.

³³² Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, Page 155. Clarification supplied.

³³³ For a more lengthy discussion of Karl Barth’s demonology, please review *Personal or Impersonal? An Analysis of Karl Barth and Merrill Unger’s Perspectives on the Personhood of the Demonic* by Scott MacDonald (MTh Thesis: Stellenbosch University, 2013).

³³⁴ Zuck, Roy B. *Basic Bible Interpretation*, Page 65.

What is a spirit? What is a demon? Lest we bring our own conceptions to the text and impose them onto the Holy Writ, we must take refuge in the biblical context when such questions arise, in tandem with other contextual assistants (e.g. Ancient Near East culture, historical interpretations).

5.3.3 Historical Fidelity

The task of theology is inherently not a modern one. Demonology has been studied for hundreds of years, by honorable and godly minds throughout the history of Christianity. Apart from explicit biblical testimony, we should take great care not to deviate from historical consensus and harmony concerning a particular doctrine.

Why should human thoughts of times past be granted such a position? On our pursuit of a biblical demonology, they safeguard us from invention. If we attempt to develop an interpretation of Scriptures which is unprecedented in the history of the church (or if it has only been espoused by heretics), we should proceed with caution! Surely, if the Spirit of God was active among Christians in ages past, should we not avoid the arrogant assertion that we have finally discovered a grand and hidden truth? Rather, the contributions of the saints should guide us in proper and biblical paths, away from the treacherousness of theological invention. Yes, they are human and prone to error as we are, but we should sidestep a conflict with the preponderance of church history unless biblically prescribed.

For instance, why should we rush to conflict with the great thinkers of the Christian church concerning the demonic? Surely, they were not without wisdom and value when they spoke of the spiritual powers! Augustine pleading in *The City of God against the Pagans* should be a guide to us.

*Do not desire false and deceitful gods. Abjure these: despise them, and spring forth into true liberty. They are not gods; they are malignant spirits, to whom your eternal felicity is a punishment.... If you desire to approach the Blessed City, then, shun the fellowship of demons.*³³⁵

And the preponderance of historical Christian doctrine openly tells of such demonic powers and their influences. We should be slow to deviate.

What other old guides should be rallied for our modern expedition? Historical interpretations can provide insight concerning our study of demonology. And we should also include the prominent confessions of the church, and although many could be represented, let us grant attention to a couple of key historical statements concerning demonology. Yet we must keep in mind that in short summations of Christian doctrine, demons are not usually a primary feature.

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*³³⁶

*For man's powers without the Holy Ghost are full of ungodly affections, and are too weak to do works which are good in God's sight. Besides, they are in the power of the devil who impels men to divers sins, to ungodly opinions, to open crimes.*³³⁷

How did God create angels? God created all the angels spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.... What is God's providence toward angels? God by his providence permitted some of the angels, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness;

³³⁵ Augustine. *The City of God against the Pagans*, Pages 92-93.

³³⁶ "The Nicene Creed." <http://www.reformed.org/documents>

³³⁷ "The Augsburg Confession," Article XX: Of Good Works. <http://www.reformed.org/documents>

*employing them all, at his pleasure, in the administrations of his power, mercy, and justice.*³³⁸

While these introductory paragraphs from historical documents uncover many issues which merit further consideration, we will let the Scriptures unveil those themes in their proper time and place. In the meantime, our point is accomplished: We should seek historical fidelity to avoid interpretive hazards.

5.3.4 Theological Harmony

The final stated criterion for this journey into biblical demonology is theological harmony. While the phrase sounds amiable, it could be easily misconstrued. What does this mean, and what does it require?

To begin with, an outline of what the criterion of theological harmony does not entail is required. To avoid confusion and false standards, here are two faulty understandings of theological harmony. First, one could assume that we must necessarily agree with other points of view, even those from outside of historical orthodoxy. But while such a goal could hypothetically be sought, one could certainly not blend and unite every viewpoint, and most critically, the biblical worldview would be scarred beyond recognition, due to the innumerable incisions and amputations required to suit so many opinions. Second, in our aim to avoid misunderstanding concerning theological harmony, theology is not obligated to always produce harmonious thoughts and dispositions among its constituents. Whether the subject is death, sin, or demons, we should not expect theology to constantly stimulate harmony when the topics at hand are sinister or alarming. Of course, Christians have hope and victory through salvation, but a glance into the darkness can aptly produce a shiver.

³³⁸ “Westminster Larger Catechism,” Questions 16 and 19. <http://www.reformed.org/documents>

Having addressed what theological harmony does not mean, how then will it appropriately function as a criterion in our demonology? Initially, we should ensure that the entire endeavor is in tune. Everything must be in place, properly structured, to convey a sense of articulated harmony in the field of demonology. While it would seem oddly fitting for a study of the demonic to be beset with chaos and disjunction, one's judgement of this work's quality should be aided by its structure.

Furthermore, the interdependence of this demonology's argumentation should stand as self-evident. As each section relates to one another, the overall content should prove interrelated. The work stands and falls as a whole, founded upon the Word of God. Lord willing, the parts should fit together as a whole, rather than being unrelated sections.

The purpose for this criterion is two-fold. First, order, while not synonymous with a cogent argument, does strengthen the power of an argument, ushering one toward illumination and away from confusion. Second, a systematically interwoven demonology that reflects and defends the Word of God is less likely to be criticized. Rather, skepticism and opposition is passed along to the source of the study itself – the Scriptures. Hopefully, those who would oppose this work would not ultimately aim their angst at the messenger but at the Message.

5.4 The Content of an Evangelical Demonology

Would it be unwise to suppose that you have never felt uncomfortable about reflecting on the demonic? Have you never considered the subject late in the evening, when the flickers of light are erased and the darkness envelops your prone form? Surely, in a rash of nervousness, you have ushered such thoughts away from your waking mind, lest your imagination terrorize and steal your rest? If this is a common feeling, why then would we bother raising the subject?

Why would we gaze at the Scriptures concerning such frightening matters? Calvin offers us solace by denoting the profits of our journey, saying:

*The tendency of all that Scripture teaches concerning devils is to put us on our guard against their wiles and machinations, that we may provide ourselves with weapons strong enough to drive out the most formidable foes. For when Satan is called the god and ruler of this world, the strong man armed, the prince of the power of the air, the roaring lion, the object of all these descriptions is to make us more cautious and vigilant, and more prepared for the contest.... Being forewarned of the constant presence of an enemy... let us not allow ourselves to be overtaken by sloth or cowardice, but, on the contrary, with minds aroused and ever on the alert, let us stand ready to resist; and, knowing that this warfare is terminated only by death, let us study to persevere. Above all, fully conscious of our weakness and want of skill, let us invoke the help of God, and attempt nothing without trusting in him, since it is his alone to supply counsel, and strength, and courage, and arms.*³³⁹

Thus, may we ask questions with force and purpose! What is the demonic? What does it do? How should we speak about them? What impact do they have in the world? These questions occur naturally within the hearts of many, including Christians. But these are not mere thoughts of curiosity. As we embark into the content of demonology itself, we are not caught up in passing interest. For the Christian church, we are bound by necessity and implored to bravery, so “let us study to persevere.”

5.4.1 The Demonic’s Malevolent Activity

Contrary to the tradition of many demonologies, we will begin by analyzing the behavior of the demonic. While many would prioritize the establishing of their being’s nature and origin,

³³⁹ Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1, XIV, Section 13, Pages 150-151.

the Holy Scripture does not share that priority. In fact, the books of the Bible are not incredibly concerned with an ontological study of the demonic, precisely defining their abilities and attributes. Throughout the biblical pages, the demonic is preeminently introduced by their behavior, especially in their relationship to God's plan of human redemption and the experiences of God's elect. They are actors in supporting roles, who are not afforded a wealth of scripted character development. Recall the contributions of the accuser in Job:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.³⁴⁰

The scene is indicative of the demonic's role in general and Satan's in particular. The emphasis is not Satan or his character. Rather, the Lord orchestrates, Satan acts, and Job suffers.

Shall we then skip a discussion of the demonic's nature? Absolutely not. But with the text's preoccupation on the activity of demons and Satan, we instead will assess the biblical depiction of their behavior, letting that information instruct our ontological perspective. If we

³⁴⁰ Job 1:6-12, NASB. Satan's activity, accusing, is on full display, and this activity is what defines his character. "The Satan (or the Accuser) represented those who opposed God and his good people. In Job the Satan assumed his classical pose of charging a good man with evil (Rev 12:10)." (Alden, Robert L. *Job*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

flip the order, we are more susceptible to proposing our opinion on the demonic's nature and then filtering the demonic's behavior through that ontological lens.

Deception. With procedural concerns put to rest, the actions of Satan and his fallen comrades appear at the beginning of human existence. As we stride through the garden of tranquility, we can hear Satan's destructive interjection. Armed with a few sentences, the Serpent's entrance shatters the idyllic paradise.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."³⁴¹

No origins are immediately evident, and the explanation of this interruption is minimal. Without the remainder of Scripture, a rogue animal could be blamed, but as Mathews mentions, one's suspicion of "something or someone sinisterly powerful" is aroused by the actions of this orating snake.³⁴² As we observe other supernatural spirits interacting with or manipulating animals, the statement of Christ about Satan in the Johannine gospel rings true.³⁴³ As Jesus

³⁴¹ Genesis 3:1-5, NASB. "Although the origin of the snake is attributed to God, there is no attempt here to explain the origins of evil. The narrative explains only the origin of human sin and guilt. There is no explanation for the serpent's capacity to talk other than possibly that it was 'crafty.' It is assumed that the animal has this ability, and the fact that the woman did not find this alarming only heightens the suspicion that the serpent is representative of something or someone sinisterly powerful. In any case the substance of what the serpent says is more important than who or what the serpent is." (Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³⁴² Ibid. See prior footnote for quotation.

³⁴³ Biblical examples of supernatural and animal interactions are fairly irregular. However, one famous case involves the corrupt prophet Balaam and the angel of the Lord in Numbers 22:22-35. Cole comments, "Upon each of three occasions the donkey evidences clear perception of the appearance of the messenger from the Lord, and she turns aside presumably in fear of [her] life.... God's intervention takes on extraordinary proportions through the opening of the heretofore unintelligible mouth of a lowly female

responded to those who rejected Him, He includes, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”³⁴⁴ Jesus’ authoritatively references the initial and ongoing “ministry” of the devil, which was mimicked by Jesus’ opponents. “They carry out what [the devil] wants, and that above all is to kill, for (a) he was a murderer from the beginning, (b) he is a liar, and (c) he is the father of lying. The saying reflects the narrative of the fall in Gen 3...”³⁴⁵ The interpretation is straightforward: Jesus understood that the original deception had its creative origin in the devil; the serpent itself was an instrument of that deception.

From only the Genesis 3 text, the patterns of demonic behavior are unveiled. First, the serpent is used and perhaps indwelt in a form of possession, hence the animal’s speech. Second, God’s good creation is corrupted and bent to wicked ends, for the created order had already been declared “very good” (1:31). Third, Satan lied when he claimed that Eve would not die (3:4). Fourth, he deceived by misrepresenting the consequences of disobeying God. Adam and Eve’s

donkey who is enabled to communicate with a human, and through the unveiling of the eyes of an incognizant prophet whose training and expertise in the ways of deity had not equipped him to see the divine representative standing directly in front of him.” (Cole, R. Dennis. *Numbers*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification added.) Yet when we are searching for overt cases of demonic relationships to the animal kingdom, we are drawn to Mark’s account of the Gerasene demoniac, wherein the demonic host actually requests a transfer to a nearby sounder of swine. Geulich writes, “Like the description of the unmanageable man in 5:3-4, whose behavior ‘Legion’ helps explain, 2000 uncontrollable swine demonstrate the immense power of the forces that had taken control of their victim. Furthermore, the death of the swine vividly depicts the destructive nature of these evil forces. From the beginning, however, these unclean spirits had recognized and submitted themselves to Jesus’ authority.” (Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26, Volume 34A*, Page 282.) However, no biblical instance seems to neatly mirror the events of Genesis 3, though these other cases certainly grant credence to the consistency of the record.

³⁴⁴ John 8:44, NASB. “The devil’s children always actually will and go on willing... to do or to carry into action... these lusts. The evil desire kindled in the heart gives birth to the corresponding deed. No evil deed is without this evil root. Thus the deed are prima facie proof first of the lusts, secondly of the inward connection with the devil.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel*, Page 649.)

³⁴⁵ Beasley-Murray, George R. *John*, Page 135. Clarification added. While it could be argued that Satan’s violent fatherhood finds its first adherent in Cain, death itself is inaugurated due to his garden deception. In that sense, Satan is a murderer prior to Cain, for all human death sprung from his lie.

eyes would be opened, but the knowledge gained would not be beneficial to them. Fifth, the devil introduced skepticism regarding the intentions of God and the divine commands. Satan stimulated doubt, as Mathew mentions. “The tactic used by the serpent was to cause doubt in the mind of the woman through interrogation and misrepresentation.”³⁴⁶ Sixth, the sum of all of Satan’s efforts was a full-fledged rebellion against the Creator. Humanity, created in the image of God, was deceived.

Deception is the prodigious evil of the demonic, upon which all its other works are founded. Satanic power and falsehood mislead, obscuring the truth. Under the dominion of the devil, humanity is blinded. Paul states:

*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*³⁴⁷

Truth is the ultimate foe of Satan and his host, and therefore, it is opposed and obfuscated.

Corruption. The activity of the demons – “unclean” spirits – did not subside in the garden. By Genesis 6, a mysterious reference to the “sons of God” appears. Wickedness was rife throughout humanity at that time, with Genesis testifying “... that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”³⁴⁸ But is the demonic actually involved in this moral decline? Mathews surveys the various positions concerning the sons of God and their role.

³⁴⁶ Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

³⁴⁷ Second Corinthians 4:3-4, NASB. “Paul blames another influence for the failure to believe: The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers. The phrase ‘god of this age’ occurs only here in the New Testament, and most understand it as a reference to Satan.... If Paul were actually referring to God here, it is strange that he does not characterize him as the God of all ages rather than simply the God of this age. Paul must be referring to Satan as the god of this age. He classifies Satan as a ‘god’ because he has a dominion, however limited by the one true God, and has subjects whom Paul labels ‘unbelievers.’ Paul portrays the archenemy Satan as blinding unbelievers’ minds.” (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³⁴⁸ Genesis 6:5, NASB.

*Historically, three opinions have won a significant following for identifying the “sons of God”: (1) angels, (2) human judges or rulers, and (3) the descendants of Seth. More recently some have suggested that this baffling epithet refers to royal despots, similar to the second view. Others have taken a combination of the angel and human views in which the human despots are demoniacs possessed by fallen angels.*³⁴⁹

Dickason’s opinion on the matter is well put, as he simplifies the interpretations to two (humans or angels). “Either view has its problems, and good men are divided on the question.”³⁵⁰

Let us therefore speak lightly, not presuming to settle the dispute with a few paragraphs. The weight of canonical evidence ushers us away from a purely humanistic interpretation, and in a brief, non-speculative manner, here are some reasons why we should advocate for the demonized rulers position. First, the phrase “sons of God” is telling. “It is true that outside of Genesis 6 the exact term “the sons of God” (*bene elohim*) is used only of angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).”³⁵¹ Second, in Matthew 22:30, Jesus does not specifically state that fallen, earth-dwelling angels cannot marry or engage in a sexual relationship.³⁵² Instead, angels in human form (as in case of the angels who visited Lot in Genesis 19:1-11) and presumably demonized humans would be more than capable of sexual behavior, as they can indulge in food and other bodily activity.³⁵³ Third, the testimony of 2 Peter 2:4-6 and Jude 6-7 guides us toward the historical reality of a licentious transgression by celestial powers. The texts read:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He

³⁴⁹ Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

³⁵⁰ Dickason, C. Fred. *Angels: Elect and Evil*, Page 222.

³⁵¹ Ibid, Page 223.

³⁵² “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” (Matthew 22:30, NASB.) Underline supplied.

³⁵³ In Genesis 18, angels ate with Abram.

*condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter...*³⁵⁴

*And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.*³⁵⁵

It is difficult to conclude that Peter and Jude had something other in mind than the sexual sin of fallen angels in Genesis 6. Jude links the promiscuity of Sodom and Gomorrah to the behavior of these demons, and God exhibited stringent justice to these parties for the sake of providing a warning of judgment to us today.

³⁵⁴ Second Peter 2:4-6, NASB. "The first judgment relates to the angels whom God did not spare when they sinned. Peter differed from Jude in that he emphasized the judgment without giving specifics of the angels' sin. Some scholars in the history of interpretation have identified this as the prehistoric fall of angels. It is doubtful, however, that Peter referred to this event in this particular text, even if it is a legitimate deduction theologically. Instead, we can be almost certain that Peter followed Jewish tradition at this point and referred to the sin angels committed with women in Gen 6:1-4..." (Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³⁵⁵ Jude 6-7, NASB. "The second example of judgment involves the angels who sinned. We have already noted that Jewish tradition linked together the sin of angels in Gen 6:1-4, the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the punishment of the wilderness generation. We can be almost certain that Jude referred here to the sin of the angels in Gen 6:1-4. The sin the angels committed, according to the Jewish tradition, was sexual intercourse with the daughters of men. Apparently Jude also understood Gen 6:1-4 in the same way. Three reasons support such a conclusion. First, Jewish tradition consistently understood Gen 6:1-4 in this way... Second, we know from vv. 14-15 that Jude was influenced by 1 Enoch, and 1 Enoch goes into great detail about the sin and punishment of these angels. Jude almost certainly would need to explain that he departed from the customary Jewish view of Gen 6:1-4 if he disagreed with Jewish tradition. The brevity of the verse supports the idea that he concurred with Jewish tradition. Third, the text forges a parallel between the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and the angels... The implication is that sexual sin was prominent in both instances." (Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.) It should be admitted that "The author of the Epistle of Jude has an especially close relationship to Enochic and other noncanonical traditions." (Nickelsburg, George W. E., and Klaus Baltzer. *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.) But concerning the Jude's relationship to 1 Enoch, the supposition that Jude was treating 1 Enoch as Scripture would be unfounded. While the later citation of 1 Enoch is intriguing, the entire contents of 1 Enoch are not validated. In Jude 5-7, he is likely accepting the historic, Jewish understanding of Genesis 6:1-4 instead of providing a comprehensive approval of 1 Enoch's speculative and elaborative contents.

The demonic action in the ante-diluvian age was to enhance and invigorate humanity's complete corruption. Of course, God's promises were proven faithful by Noah and the single family of righteousness, but Lutzer's description of the ancient time is fitting.

*These evil angels left their abode and inhabited bodies of human warriors, the mighty ones of the earth. These mighty rulers were not divine, nor were they the offspring of the gods (as often believed in pagan religions.) Instead, these... were ordinary human beings given superhuman strength because they were demonically controlled. They lived lives of rampant sexuality and violence. They married as many women as they wished and engaged in all manner of sexual perversion. The children of these marriages were not god-kings, but men of flesh and blood who eventually died in the flood.*³⁵⁶

Surely, such a scene of corruption would require a dramatic intervention of earth-cleansing wrath.

Dominion. After God's dramatic reordering of the Earth by the flood, Noah and his offspring are left to repopulate a refreshed creation with new boundaries. Being required by God to fill the lands (Genesis 9:1), widespread rebellion again stirred at the Tower of Babel. God intervened, and the table of nations in Genesis 10 was born. Diversity was forged.

But what does this have to do with the demonic? The division and establishment of the nations are discussed in the song of Moses. In the New American Standard Bible, Deuteronomy 32:8-9 says:

*When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of man,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the sons of Israel.*

³⁵⁶ Lutzer, Erwin W. *The Serpent of Paradise*, Page 74.

*For the LORD's portion is His people;
Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.*³⁵⁷

The phrase “according to the number of the sons of Israel” does not seem to logically fit. How did God set up nations in accordance with an entity that did not exist at that time? A textual issue is apparent, since other translations say “sons of God” (ESV) or “heavenly court” (NLT). Heiser directs us back to the text itself, arguing that it should be rendered “sons of God,” as the LXX/Qumran manuscripts evidence.³⁵⁸ He comments:

*Although some may fear that to adopt the reading of LXX amounts to embracing the notion that Yahweh is the author of polytheism, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, a proper understanding of the concept of the divine council in the Old Testament provides a decisive argument in favor of the LXX / Qumran reading.*³⁵⁹

In other words, God instituted an angelic host to oversee the affairs of the nations. The sons of God were granted dominion over their realms, while the Lord specifically called Israel to be His own people. The division of humanity in Genesis 10 also determined the distribution of spiritual beings and their national assignments. Newsom helpfully summarizes, “According to Deut 32:8 (LXX and 4QDeut), when God organized the political structure of the world, each of the nations was assigned to one of the angels/minor deities, with Israel reserved for Yahweh’s own possession.”³⁶⁰

Thus, we have affirmed that supernatural powers have dominion over the various nations of the Earth, but are these unseen rulers actually demons? Yes. The rest of Scripture supports

³⁵⁷ “The point of departure was when the Most High... divided humankind into nations and assigned to them their geographical and historical allotments (v. 8a). This act of universal sovereignty supplies clear evidence of the Lord’s concern for the whole world, his special selection of Israel notwithstanding.” (Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.) Unfortunately, Merrill does not interact with the textual debate and instead comments in line with the Masoretic Text reading.

³⁵⁸ Heiser, Michael S. “Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God,” <http://www.thedivinecouncil.com/DT32BibSac.pdf>

³⁵⁹ Ibid, Page 8.

³⁶⁰ Newsom, Carol A. “Angels,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume I, Page 249.

that demons continue to serve as ruling powers in the created realm. First, the testimony of Daniel is critical. After a terrifying vision, Daniel is comforted, and the dialogue mentions:

*Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.... Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.*³⁶¹

While we cannot entertain the many questions which arise from this text, we must ask, “Who are these princes?” These are the spiritual rulers over the various nations, and they are in conflict with one another. One commentary plainly states, “The prince of the kingdom of Persia: This indicated the patron angel of Persia.”³⁶² Unbeknownst to Daniel, unseen forces were battling as he prayed, and these angels, except for Michael and Gabriel, do not appear to be holy angels who minister to God’s people. Rather, they are corrupt powers, placed over the nations. Second, the Scriptures also depict the divine council, wherein many spiritual powers – sons of God – convene in the heavenly presence of God. Observe the scene from Job and 1 Kings.

*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.... Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.*³⁶³

³⁶¹ Daniel 10:12-14, 20, NASB.

³⁶² Collins, John Joseph, Frank Moore Cross, and Adela Yarbro Collins. *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.

³⁶³ Job 1:6, 2:1, NASB. “The “sons of God” are both plural and inferior to God.... Apparently God has a council or cabinet... Not every one of them is good because 1 Kings 22:20-23 speaks of a “spirit” willing

Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. The LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ The LORD said to him, ‘How?’ And he said, ‘I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.’”³⁶⁴

While many are familiar with the story of Job, the prophetic utterance of Micaiah is less familiar yet more detailed. Apparently, the spirits, both evil and holy, gather before God. God’s sovereign purposes for them are varied, but they can exert testing (Job) and judgment (Ahab). By extension, we should not be surprised that God would delegate nations to the purview of these fallen powers, though they still operate as vassals in a monotheistic universe. And in case someone would accuse this perspective as a form of polytheism, Ferdinando’s assertion is correct, “... Yahweh’s council is simply a forum in which he conveys orders and executes judgement, not a council of gods.”³⁶⁵ Third, the New Testament employs heavenly and authoritarian lingo concerning the evil spiritual powers. This is famously articulated in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, which reads:

*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*³⁶⁶

to be a “lying spirit in the mouths of all his [i.e., Ahab’s] prophets.” The Satan was among them or perhaps even their leader.” (Alden, Robert L. *Job*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³⁶⁴ First Kings 22:19-22, NASB. “... As in earlier difficult passages in the former prophets (e.g., 1 Sam 16:13-14; 2 Sam 24:1-17) this text focuses on God’s sovereignty. Nothing escapes the Lord’s notice, and no one operates outside of the Lord’s jurisdiction.” (House, Paul R. *1,2 Kings*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³⁶⁵ Ferdinando, Keith. *The Triumph of Christ in African Perspective: A Study of Demonology and Redemption in the African Context*, Page 143.

³⁶⁶ Ephesians 6:11-12, NASB. “Here ‘the devil’ is singled out as the primary enemy, the chief of the opposing army, so that the forces of evil which lie behind human activity are seen as having a personal

Christian salvation was won at the cross, yet the struggle against demonic forces is ongoing, even as they sit in lofty locations. In the process of living wisely in Christ's service, we chaff and battle against these powers which oversee the nations and their wickedness.

The demonic's dominion continues today. Even though the work of Christ was pivotal, the demonic powers of the nations are not yet judged. However, in contrast to ages past where God had one nation out of many, while the rest of the nations were left under their demonic overlords, we currently inhabit a time where the rule of Christ is expanding among the nations, shaming and unveiling the weakness of the spiritual rulers.

False Worship and Occultism. After the dispersion of humanity from the Tower of Babel, the activity of the demons not only extended over the nations but also over the false worship which permeated. Various "gods" were set up over every land, represented by idols crafted by human hands. Yet, the one true God had the Israelites, and their invisible God was a stark contrast to the idolatry of the nations.³⁶⁷ The veneration of false gods and the creation of idols was strictly prohibited. The Lord said, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them..."³⁶⁸ But what does idolatry and false gods have to do with demons?

center.... The term... 'world rulers' originated in astrological discussion where it referred to the planets and their determination of human fate and world affairs... Also in the magical papyri, gods such as Sarapis and Hermes are called world rulers, and the use of this term for evil spirit powers here may indicate that the writer shares the view of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:20 that pagan gods are closely linked with demonic forces." (Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*, Pages 443-444.)

³⁶⁷ See Psalm 115 for one biblical example of the distinction between God and the idols.

³⁶⁸ Exodus 20:3-5a, NASB. "Why, then, did God not just say, 'I am the only God. Don't believe in any others'? The answer is, as previously noted, to be found in the range of meaning of the term ['gods']. The word... carries the connotation of 'supernatural beings,' including angels. Accordingly, this first word/commandment implicitly acknowledges that there are many 'gods' (nonhuman, nonearthly beings) in the same sense that Ps 82 does (or that Jesus does in John 10:34-36) but at the same time demands that only Yahweh be worshiped as the sole divinity, or God. All other 'gods' (supernatural beings such as

Before we answer that question, let us take a moment to review a small portion of the cultural context which Stuart supplies in his commentary on Exodus.

*Ancients assumed that the presence of a god or goddess was guaranteed by the presence of an idol since the idol “partook” of the very essence of the divinity it was designed to represent. When, for example, a statue of a given god was carved and certain ritual incantations spoken over that statue to cause the essence of the god to enter it, the statue was then understood to become a functioning conduit for anything done in its presence from the worshiper to that god.*³⁶⁹

Stuart introduces us to the concept of idols as conduits, and that is helpful for us as we consider the role that the demonic plays in idolatry.

As much as it seems strange to the modern pluralistic mind, the Scriptures portray false gods and idols as demonic. First, in Paul’s discussion about eating meat sacrificed to idols, he interjects the demonic’s involvement.

*What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.*³⁷⁰

The actual idols themselves are nothing, meaningless, and empty. They are simply material. Yet something stands behind these idols; the idols are a conduit to the evil supernatural forces which reside among us and assemble in the heavens. Second, Paul’s concept does not appear out of nothing. Instead, it reflects the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 and the testimony of Psalm

angels) are to be understood and appreciated for their roles in the universe, but only Yahweh is divine.” (Stuart, Douglas K. *Exodus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification added.)

³⁶⁹ Stuart, Douglas K. *Exodus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

³⁷⁰ First Corinthians 10:19-20, NASB. “The presupposition of vv 19–20 is the same as of 8:5: behind the gods there lurk demons. Paul bases this view on Deut 32:17. This makes his demand clear. Sacrifices would make the demons into gods, powers, and bring the participants into bondage to them.” (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

106.^{371 372} We examined Deuteronomy 32:8 earlier, but we are moving down the page to verse

17. Referencing the religious rebellion of Israel, it states:

*They sacrificed to demons who were not God,
To gods whom they have not known,
New gods who came lately,
Whom your fathers did not dread.*³⁷³

When the Israelites abandoned the worship of the Lord and selfishly pursued the gods of the Gentiles, they were offering sacrifices to demonic powers. Third, the epistle to Galatia also approaches the subject of supernatural powers. Paul exclaims about the Galatians being bewitched (3:1), and then in chapter four, he writes concerning the state of being in bondage before Christ's coming:

*So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.... However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?*³⁷⁴

Humanity, apart from the knowledge of God through Christ, is in “bondage under the elemental things of the world.” Arnold identifies these “elemental things” as “evil demonic powers of the

³⁷¹ Psalm 106:37 says, “They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons...” (NASB.)

³⁷² Psalm 96:5 is one debated reference. “For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.” (NASB) However, the Septuagint renders “idols” as “demons,” since the essence of the word “denotes weak/insufficient/worthless things...” (Tate, Marvin E. *Psalms 51-100*, Page 510.)

³⁷³ Ferdinando advocates that this text (along with Psalm 106:37) is one of the few Old Testament cases which references demons with “any certainty.” (Ferdinando, Keith. *The Triumph of Christ in African Perspective: A Study of Demonology and Redemption in the African Context*, Page 151.)

³⁷⁴ Galatians 4:3, 8-9, NASB. “In Gal. 4:8, Paul compares the *stoicheia* with beings that the pagans regard as gods. In denying that these beings are gods, Paul is not denying that they have a real existence, only their claim to be gods. Paul expressed a similar idea to the Corinthians when he noted that there are many entities “called gods”... to whom sacrifices are made (1 Cor. 8:5) whom he subsequently identifies as evil demons (1 Cor. 10:19-20).” (Arnold, Clinton. “Returning to the Domain of the Powers: Stoicheia as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3,9.” *Novum Testamentum* 38.1, 1996, Page 60.)

same category as the hostile ‘principalities and powers.’”³⁷⁵ Galatians is outlining the demonic slavery of the former religious order, imposed through the false gods of the nations (“those which by nature are no gods”), and Paul’s concern is obvious. Surely, having experienced the adoption of God as His children, they would not retain the oppressiveness of their former overlords! Following Jesus’ example in Matthew 4:9-10, Christians then and now must reject the worship of Satan and all other false gods.

How does this discussion about false religion, the gods of the nations, and the demonic relate to occultism? Let us begin by defining occultism. The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* says:

*Those phenomena collectively known as “the occult” may be said to have the following distinct characteristics: (1) the disclosure and communication of information unavailable to humans through normal means (beyond the five senses); (2) the placing of persons in contact with supernatural powers, paranormal energies, or demonic forces; (3) the acquisition and mastery of power in order to manipulate or influence other people into certain actions.*³⁷⁶

While a complete survey of the innumerable manifestations of occult practices is not plausible at this time, we can comment on occultism’s relationship to the demonic, with the demonic as the empowering entity behind occultism.

Occultism is an extension of false religion, because it rebelliously turns away from God’s provision and looks elsewhere for supernatural power and knowledge. All false worship is occultism, and all occultism is in some sense a false religion, except that occultism is more personalized and less institutional. The same “benefits” and features permeate them both.

³⁷⁵ Arnold, Clinton. "Returning to the Domain of the Powers: Stoicheia as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3,9." *Novum Testamentum* 38.1, 1996, Page 63.

³⁷⁶ Enroth, R. M. "The Occult," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Page 787.

But do the Scriptures indicate that occultism is demonic? While the Bible soundly condemns occultism of every kind, the demonic realm is only briefly and occasionally exposed as accomplices. Keeping in mind the prior link we connected between demons and the gods of the nations, here are a few texts for us to consider. First, in the showdown between the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt, dueling works were on display in Exodus 7. When Moses and Aaron would perform one supernatural act (e.g. a staff transmogrifying into a snake, water turning to blood), the Egyptian magicians would apparently replicate it.³⁷⁷ While it is possible that the magicians were charlatans performing illusions, the scene at least ties the occult to the false gods of Egypt.³⁷⁸ The same might be said of Simon the magician from Acts 8.³⁷⁹ Second, look at 2 Kings, with its provided reasoning for the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel.

*They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him.*³⁸⁰

No debate exists about the wickedness of Israel! But as we ponder the relationship of occultism and the demonic, evidence of that link is provided by the author of 2 Kings. In this analysis of Israel's sins, the worship of false gods (including human sacrifice) is partnered together with

³⁷⁷ Exodus 7:11, 22.

³⁷⁸ Stuart asserts that the magicians employed trickery, instead of "any supernatural means." (Stuart, Douglas K. *Exodus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.) However, the transformed staff presents a difficulty for that hypothesis.

³⁷⁹ "This Simon belonged to a class of charlatans that were rather common at this period, who practiced occult arts in order to impress the people and to gain a following. Much was plain sorcery which was at times combined with a shrewd use of natural laws that were otherwise unknown." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, Pages 318-319.)

³⁸⁰ Second King 17:16-17, NASB. "The writer's frustration is evident as the summary continues. Israel has imitated the worst tradition of their fathers and 'rejected his decrees and the covenant' (v. 15). They practiced worship rites connected with pagan deities. More specifically, they bowed down before Baal and the Canaanite astral gods. Some of them offered human sacrifices. In short, 'They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.'" (House, Paul R. *1,2, Kings*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

“divination and enchantments.” Since the worship of such gods has been established as demonic, occult practices and demons certainly experience some overlap or at least some association from this text, when canonically considered. Third, the most decisive link between occultism and demonic activity is in Acts 16. The Apostle Paul confronts a demonized slave girl who had an unusual ability.

It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.” She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment.³⁸¹

In this instance, we perceive the underlying entanglement of occultism, false religion, and demonic powers. The fortune-telling girl is treated like any other demoniac, requiring an exorcism in keeping with the model of Christ, yet as Polhill mentioned, the term for the spirit (python) is tied to the pagan religion of that region. A demon was at work, empowering the girl’s abilities, and through the power of Jesus’ name, she was released from her spiritual slavery.

From the content and context of Scripture, divorcing demonic activity from the occult seems impossible. Starting in the beginning, when the serpent offered illicit supernatural knowledge to Eve, occultism has been a snare for many. The path forward for those burdened by

³⁸¹ Acts 16:16-18, NASB. “On one of the occasions when the four missionaries were going outside the city to the place of prayer, they were encountered by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. The Greek speaks literally of a ‘python spirit.’ The python was the symbol of the famous Delphic oracle and represented the god Apollo, who was believed to render predictions of future events. The serpent had thus become a symbol of augury, and anyone who was seen to possess the gift of foretelling the future was described as led by the ‘python.’... So Paul, in a form reminiscent of Jesus’ exorcisms, commanded the spirit to exit the girl. The spirit did so immediately.” (Polhill, John B. *Acts*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

occult practices is demonstrated by the faithful Ephesians in Acts 19. They burned their magical items and turned wholly to the Lord. The value of demonic power and knowledge had been outstripped by the inbreaking of the gospel of Christ and the triumph of Jesus' name over the demonized.

Conflict. Throughout Scripture, another persistent overarching activity of the demonic realm is conflict. Even as they are subordinate to the supreme Sovereign, they still war against what is right and holy. While we have already observed some of the aspects of this conflict, let us outline exactly who they war against and for what purpose.

First and foremost, do the demonic powers battle against God? While an affirmative answer is immediately evoked, some nuance is necessary. The conflict between God and the demonic host is not necessarily an open war in many texts. But yes, they are in conflict, and since this conflict is profoundly one-sided, it will be addressed under “defeat,” one of our upcoming categories of demonic activity.

Second, demons war against undefiled angelic powers. In Daniel 10:13, the spiritual prince of Persia delayed an angelic ambassador to Daniel, frustrating the answer to his prayers for a few weeks. We can even listen in on a squabble between the devil and the archangel Michael in Jude 9 as they “argued about the body of Moses.”³⁸² But the culmination of the biblical testimony concerning the battle between angels and demons is found in Revelation 12:7. John records, “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the

³⁸² “Even though the Old Testament says the Lord buried Moses (Deut 34:6), speculation arose over his burial since no human being observed the burial place. The puzzling element in Jude is the reference to the argument over the body of Moses between Michael and the devil. The terms used suggest a legal dispute over Moses' body. By establishing Moses' guilt, the devil would deprive him of the right of an honorable burial and presumably claim ownership over his body.” (Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war...”³⁸³ Despite the myriad of artistic representations of such heavenly conflicts, the Scriptures are actually stingy with details as to what this conflict resembles. Presumably, spiritual struggle is still a fixture of the unseen world, but we know little about it.

Third, the demonic powers fight against humanity in a corporate sense. Sometimes we are preoccupied by the individual aspect of the conflict, such as demonization. But as we observed in our analysis of the demonic’s influences in false religions and the nations, demons have an organized strategy to attack and corrupt humanity corporately.

Outside of the prior categories, the conflict can also be felt among God’s people. For instance, 1 Chronicles records, “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.”³⁸⁴ By targeting a specific person, Satan was able to inflict widespread harm throughout the Jewish nation. Within the church, we remember that Paul encouraged the Ephesian church to “stand firm” against “the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”³⁸⁵ We, God’s corporate people, are in conflict with demonic powers, as we represent our Savior and His expanding message throughout the nations.

Fourth, demonic powers war against humans in the individual sense. Demonization is the most obvious category depicted in Scripture. Here is one prolonged case from Mark 9.

³⁸³ “The second sign is a war in heaven, further accentuating the age-old battle that would continue through the tribulation period. This pitched conflict featured Michael (the leader of God’s faithful angels) versus Satan (the leader of the demonic foes) (v.7), with Michael’s followers prevailing (v.8).” (Green, Daniel. *Moody Bible Commentary*, Page 2015.)

³⁸⁴ First Chronicles 21:1, NASB. “In 2 Sam 24:1 it was the Lord whose anger against Israel (the reason is not given) led him to ‘incite’ David to count Israel. Satan is not mentioned there. At any rate, the Samuel passage suggests that the sinful designs of Satan and David were used by the Lord as agents of his wrath.” (Thompson, J. A. *1,2 Chronicles*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

³⁸⁵ Ephesians 6:11-12, NASB. “Paul lets the whole army of the devil parade before our eyes. This is the tremendous power we face, against this we must stand victorious. Equipped with God’s armor, we can.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians*, Page 658.)

And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" ... When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.³⁸⁶

Not only was the demon inhabiting and occasionally controlling the child, but it was violently destructive. The demon had nearly killed the child, and it was causing the physical symptoms of muteness and deafness.

But not all demonic influence (or demonization) is so stark. First Timothy 4:1-2 warns us about another demonic activity of conflict, saying, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron..."³⁸⁷ The enemy was interested in undermining the corporate body of believers by

³⁸⁶ Mark 9:17-18, 20-22, 25-27, NASB. "The grim summary of what this evil spirit has done to the boy clarifies the desperation felt by the father. The demonic possession is not only disruptive and oppressive but dangerous and potentially fatal." (Evans, Craig A. *Mark 8:27-16:20*, Page 52.)

³⁸⁷ NASB. "This is a genitive of source: doctrines that emanate from demons, and not the objective genitive: doctrines about demons, the latter the Scriptures themselves contain.... We need not puzzle our minds about the occult activity of demons; the antichristian doctrines betray their origin all too plainly." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon*, Page 619.)

invigorating false teachers and supplying false doctrines. This was not merely debate and division. It was demonic according to Paul, and he “also saw behind the activity of his opponents in Corinth the work of Satan.”³⁸⁸ Also, John warns us to “test the spirits,” lest we too become an instrument of demonic dogma.³⁸⁹ “His warning is clear: behind every statement is a spirit... but not every spirit is the Spirit of God.”³⁹⁰ In this way, we, churches and individuals, are at conflict with demonic powers for the preservation and propagation of the truth.

“Devil” means “slanderer.”³⁹¹ And Satan has accused God’s people, as demonstrated through Job and through Joshua the High Priest.³⁹² It then should be no surprise that he and his fallen comrades would accuse and slander as a form of warfare, both in heaven and on Earth. This is why Revelation refers to Satan as “the accuser of our brethren... he who accuses them before our God day and night.”³⁹³ And we can also view a case of apparent accusation from the fourth chapter of Job. Eliphaz, in his ungodly opposition of Job, appeals to the whispers of a nocturnal spirit.³⁹⁴ This spirit had supplied information to strengthen Eliphaz’s reasoning, which was ultimately rebuked by God. The spirit said:

³⁸⁸ Dibelius, Martin, and Hans Conzelmann. *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.

³⁸⁹ First John 4:1, NASB.

³⁹⁰ Akin, Daniel L. *1,2,3 John*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

³⁹¹ The Greek word *diabolos* (devil) “was an adjective generally denoting something or someone ‘slandorous’ or ‘defamatory.’” (Riley, G. J. “Devil,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Page 244.)

³⁹² “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’” (Zechariah 3:1-2, NASB.)

³⁹³ Revelation 12:10, NASB. “The names used in v. 9 point to these two designations: ‘the accuser, the one accusing,’ who makes it his terrible business to accuse.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation*, Page 379.)

³⁹⁴ Job 4:15-16 says, “Then a spirit passed by my face; the hair of my flesh bristled up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; a form *was* before my eyes; *there was* silence, then I heard a voice...” (NASB.) “Eliphaz heard something superhuman in a quiet voice.” (Alden, Robert L. *Job*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

*Can mankind be just before God?
Can a man be pure before his Maker?
He puts no trust even in His servants;
And against His angels He charges error.
How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before the moth...*³⁹⁵

The spirit disparaged the standing of humanity before God, similar to Satan's questioning about Job in the preceding chapters. Muddling truth with accusation, this deceitful demon even raised the issue of how God judges sinful angels. How much more should frail humans be subject to God's wrath, so to speak? The spirit raised a perspective that leaves no room for redemption or vindication, which is what Job eventually receives. The accusation, along with the human agent who delivered it, failed, but this spirit fed the conflict through Eliphaz's mouth.

The conflict between humans and the demonic also includes temptation. After the Serpent's wily deception in the garden of Eden, he and his coworkers have continued to instigate and prompt humanity to evil. While "each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust," this is not to exclude the possibility that other factors and characters may encourage those lusts.³⁹⁶ Thus, Paul warns that Satan (as representative of the entire wicked host) can take advantage of one's desires, luring them into sexual sin. First Corinthians 7:5 says to married believers, "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you

³⁹⁵ Job 4:17-19, NASB. "When Eliphaz referred to dust in v.19, it is likely that he acquired the information to connect dust with the Maker of man and the habitation of man, not to mention the material the Maker used to create man, from Genesis (Gn 2:7). Even angels, God's servants (possibly fallen angels and Satan), are not perfect, so certainly humans are perishable and die, yet without wisdom." (Mayhew, Eugene J. *Moody Bible Commentary*, Page 708.)

³⁹⁶ James 1:14, NASB. "This verse names the true source of temptations: not God, but desire!" (Dibelius, Martin, and Heinrich Greeven. *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

because of your lack of self-control.”³⁹⁷ Sexual sin is only but a small portion of the demonic temptation of humanity. Again, recall the words of Paul.

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*³⁹⁸

In depicting the world, Paul asserts that humanity is following its desires and lusts as creatures of wrath, but the demonic powers, headed by Satan, are an integral part of this predicament, working in and among us (corporately and individually) for the promotion of perniciousness. While Christians have freedom from these powers, we are not immune from their activities which oppose righteousness. On every level, conflict with these evil powers is felt, and redeemed humanity and angelic forces war against them. But the conflict will end with their demise.

Defeat. Satan and the demons lose. This is a theme which saturates the biblical narrative concerning the demonic. At nearly every turn, they encounter defeat and failure, receiving reminder after reminder of their approaching doom.

³⁹⁷ NASB. “Satan promotes the philosophy of the priority of bodily satisfaction.... God has provided marriage for the normal expression of sex, and partners must recognize their mutual responsibilities. They provide Satan with an opportunity to tempt to sexual sins when there is not satisfaction in marriage.” (Dickason, C. Fred. *Angels: Elect and Evil*, Page 146.)

³⁹⁸ Ephesians 2:1-3, NASB. “Paul, in 1 Cor 2:12, had recognized that there is a spirit at work in the world which is the antithesis to the Spirit of God. Here in Ephesians, that spiritual force is said to be under the rule of the same evil being who rules the air. The writer makes clear that this ruler’s evil influence has both a cosmic and a human sphere.... Although the ruler of this world has been defeated cf. 1:20-22, he is not surrendering without a struggle and without still making his powerful influence felt.” (Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*, Page 97.)

To begin this theme of defeat, let us briefly entertain a text which merits its own work entirely: Ezekiel 28:11-19.³⁹⁹ In the midst of prophecies about various rulers, the prophet utters about a “king of Tyre.” But this “king” is afforded a description which apparently surpasses a mere human ruler. The pericope in question introduces a person who is called a created cherub (v. 13-14), and he blamelessly lived in the garden of God, garbed with jewels (v. 13, 15). The text is peculiar! Who is being discussed? After dismissing unsatisfactory explanations, Cooper posits:

*Who, then, was the person whose character was like the king of Tyre that fulfilled the elements of vv. 12-17? The serpent was known for his craftiness (Gen 3:1), his deceit, and his anti-God attitude (3:4), leading humanity to sin (3:6-7). Elsewhere he is presented as a deceiver (Rev 12:9; 20:2), an instigator of evil (John 13:2, 27), one who seeks worship as a god (Luke 4:6-8; 2 Thess 2:3-4), and one who seeks to get others to renounce God (Job 2:4-5). He appears as an angel of God (2 Cor 11:14) and as the father of lies and violence (John 8:44), distorts Scripture (Matt 4:6), opposes believers (2 Cor 2:11), and finally is judged (Matt 25:41; Rev 19:20-21; 20:13-15). Therefore the conclusion that the figure behind the poetic symbol is the serpent (also known as the adversary, the devil, Satan; Rev 12:9) is a logical one.*⁴⁰⁰

Ezekiel is addressing the person who stands behind the wickedness of the nations. “The real motivating force behind the King of Tyre was the adversary... who opposed God and His people from the beginning...”⁴⁰¹ He was initially a cherub, but he plunged into prideful sin. Yet, this being of position and power, whom we identify as Satan, is branded by defeat from the outset of his rebellion. He is driven out in disgrace (v. 16) and cast to the Earth (v. 17). In the words of

³⁹⁹ Isaiah 14:12-17 is often considered as a sister passage to Ezekiel 28:11-19. Cooper asserts, “Of the twenty elements associated with the king of Tyre in 28:11-19 most also are found in Isaiah’s indictment of another tyrannical ruler, the king of Babylon (14:12-17).” (Cooper, Lamar Eugene. *Ezekiel*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.) Since Ezekiel is the more substantial of the two, it will feature under this theme of demonic defeat.

⁴⁰⁰ Cooper, Lamar Eugene. *Ezekiel*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

Lutzer, Satan's insurrection was "a roll of the dice," and "his future was gambled in a slot machine that paid no dividends."⁴⁰² He lost, and he would keep losing.

The biblical portrayal of the demonic's defeat has many chapters, naturally unfolding from the first fiasco. A victory was apparently gained in the garden, but then it quickly soured as God cursed the snake and proclaimed its ultimate defeat, by human seed no less! The short-lived success of sinful corruption in Genesis 6 was met by a restorative flood. He tried to accuse Job and Joshua the High Priest, to no avail.

The defeats escalated with the entrance of the incarnate Son. Jesus overcame the temptations of Satan in the wilderness.⁴⁰³ Without appealing to another authority, He cast out demons. But Christ's battle with the enemy was not solely with exorcisms. He had come with a greater soteriological purpose.

*... the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.*⁴⁰⁴

Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.*⁴⁰⁵

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, [Jesus] Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who

⁴⁰² Lutzer, Erwin W. *The Serpent of Paradise*, Page 27.

⁴⁰³ Matthew 4:1-11. "Satan has tested Jesus and has failed. Jesus sends him away with a command that calls attention simultaneously to his victory and to his authority." (Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 1-13*, Pages 68-69.)

⁴⁰⁴ First John 3:8, NASB. "To the activity of the devil, which permeates the whole course of history and causes sin, is opposed the revelation of the Son of God.... The purpose of [the Son of God's] appearance in history is the destruction of the works of the devil." (Strecker, Georg, and Harold W. Attridge. *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*. Hermeneia, Logos Database. Clarification added.)

⁴⁰⁵ John 12:31-32, NASB. "...the utterance of Jesus employs a well-understood picture to show the change of situation for the world when Jesus was 'lifted up' to heaven via the cross: Satan was *dethroned* and the Son of Man *enthroned* over the world for which he died." (Beasley-Murray, George R. *John*, Pages 213-214.)

*had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*⁴⁰⁶

By the death of Christ, freedom from the devil's purposes of sin, guilt, condemnation, and death was wrought. Satan's power was broken, and the nations were finally receiving the gospel of freedom from death and its master. Jesus sent forth servants like Paul, commissioning them to reach the world, "to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."⁴⁰⁷ The old order was disturbed by Christ's presence and defeated by His sacrificial mission, as He unmasked and "disarmed the rulers and authorities," as Colossians mentions.⁴⁰⁸ Cowering before Him, the forces of wickedness lost when Christ arrived.

With Christ's arrival, ministry, and departure, His followers began to share in His victory over the demonic, but it was not without effort and struggle. The disciples were frustrated by a

⁴⁰⁶ Hebrews 2:14, NASB. Clarification supplied. "Christ's participation in 'blood and flesh' resulted in his death, whereby he achieved a decisive victory over and 'destroyed the power'... of the one who held sway over death. The imagery evokes the depiction of the Messiah's victory over demonic forces widespread in Jewish apocalyptic tradition and in early Christianity. This general tradition frequently becomes specified as a victory over death in Christian sources. The explicit linking of the devil and death here is also based on traditional association of Satan and death." (Attridge, Harold W., and Helmut Koester. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

⁴⁰⁷ Acts 26:18, NASB. "Ultimately, the role of witness is the key role for every disciple. All who have encountered the risen Christ are commissioned to be witnesses (Acts 1:8)... Christ is the servant of God who opens the eyes of those in darkness, who brings light to the nations. To proclaim him is to bring the light of the gospel. It could hardly be more aptly summarized than Paul did here. The gospel brings light, opens one's eyes to the truth in Christ. Paul further described this as a turning from the power of Satan to the power of God. The sharp dualistic language of light and darkness is found throughout the New Testament and is metaphorical for two divergent ways of living. The one way can be described in various ways—living according to the world, under Satan, in darkness, in sin, apart from God, totally self-centered existence. The alternative is life in Christ, a life marked by righteousness, walking in the light, directed by God and not by self." (Polhill, John B. *Acts*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁰⁸ Colossians 2:15, NASB. "A paradox occurred. Jesus hung naked and disgraced, dying publicly for sinners. The evil forces assumed they had triumphed. In reality, through this act of both sacrifice and triumph, God disgraced these evil beings. The tables were turned. God triumphed in the redemptive work of Christ." (Melick, Richard R. *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

demon in Luke 9:37-43, yet the seventy prevailed according to Luke 10:17-20! But by trusting in the power and authority of Jesus, Christians put demons to flight in Acts. Philip was one prominent example.

*Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was much rejoicing in that city.*⁴⁰⁹

In the midst of remarkable triumphs, the early Christian church was not immune from setbacks, as Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira, perhaps aiming to corrupt the church in its infancy.⁴¹⁰ But the spiritual armor of Ephesians reminds Christians that they have been supplied every resource necessary to thrive in battle with the enemy and his demonic horde, and James encourages, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”⁴¹¹ The defeats still persist, and even the so-called victories, such as when Paul is afflicted by a

⁴⁰⁹ Acts 8:5-8, NASB. “Philip’s preaching, like that of the Jerusalem apostles, was undergirded by ‘signs,’ miracles that pointed beyond themselves to the power and life to be found in the one he proclaimed (v. 6). Demons were exorcised. Paralytics and lame persons were healed (v. 7). Ultimately, it was the gospel they responded to, not the miracles (v. 12).” (Polhill, John B. *Acts*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴¹⁰ Acts 5:3. “All this had happened because he had allowed the archenemy of the Spirit, Satan, to enter his heart. Satan ‘filled’ Ananias’s heart just as he had Judas’s (cf. Luke 22:3). Like Judas, Ananias was motivated by money (cf. Luke 22:5). But in filling the heart of one of its members, Satan had now entered for the first time into the young Christian community as well.” (Polhill, John B. *Acts*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database. Clarification added.)

⁴¹¹ James 4:7, NASB. “The next admonition of this verse calls the believer to put up active resistance to the devil and his influence. Although humbling oneself does not cause the devil to flee, such submission to God is an important precondition for doing battle with the devil. But a defensive posture is all that is required to rout the evil one: resist him, and he will flee.... if he is consciously resisted, in submission to God, the devil cannot fight back and must flee the attack that is our resistance to him.” (Richardson, Kurt A. *James*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

messenger (or angel) from Satan, they are harnessed for the good of God's people and purposes.⁴¹²

Greater defeats loom yet ahead for the demonic powers. According to Revelation 20, Satan will be bound in the abyss for a thousand years, prior to his permanent and excruciating stay in the lake of fire.

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.... And the devil who deceived [the nations] was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*⁴¹³

All of Satan's rebellious efforts will culminate after the Millennium, yet the Lord and His saints will prevail. As Paul pronounces in the book of Romans, alluding to the curse of the serpent in Genesis 3, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."⁴¹⁴ Total defeat of the devil

⁴¹² Second Corinthians 12:7. "Does this Satanic angel try to hinder the advance of the gospel in some way (see 1 Thess 2:18)? If so, Satan's purposes are thwarted (see 2:11). What is sent to torment Paul is transformed by God into a means of proclaiming Christ's power and grace. This surprising twist reflects the paradoxical way God defeats Satan. God permits Satan to strike the apostle, but God turns the stricken Paul into an even greater instrument of his power." (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴¹³ Revelation 20:1-3, 10, NASB. "The abyss is a place of confinement for certain demons prior to their eternal torment in the lake of fire. Satan would be bound there for a thousand years to keep him from deceiving the nations during the reign of Christ.... Not even experiencing the wonderful leadership of Christ and the ideal environment of the millennium will convince these insurgents (the peoples who follow Satan after his release from the abyss) to obey. After this, the devil... will be cast into the lake of fire to join the beast and the false prophet." (Green, Daniel. *Moody Bible Commentary*, Page 2024. Clarification added.)

⁴¹⁴ Romans 16:20, NASB. "The metaphor of crushing a foe underfoot evokes martial victory both in the Hebrew and in the Greco-Roman traditions. The familiar refrains from Ps 110 of making enemies a 'footstool' and Ps 8 of placing all things 'under his feet' echo through the NT. Ps 91:13 promises that with God's assistance, the elect will tread on dangerous serpents and wild beasts, fulfilling the promise of Gen 3:15." (Jewett, Robert, Roy David Kotansky, and Eldon Jay Epp. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.) But how will Christians be involved in the crushing of Satan? First

is near. This will be a fitting conclusion to Satan's long but fruitless rebellion, and his coworkers will not garner exemption. God will punish the entire demonic realm! Isaiah prophesied:

*So it will happen in that day,
That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high,
And the kings of the earth on earth.
They will be gathered together
Like prisoners in the dungeon,
And will be confined in prison;
And after many days they will be punished.*⁴¹⁵

For Christ to reign directly over the Earth, every opponent to the true God will be defeated, including the kings of the nations with their arrogance and the demons with their deceit.

“Have you come here to torment us before our time?” This was the cry of the demons when they were startled by Jesus' earthly location.⁴¹⁶ Soon, the time they fear will arrive, and their defeat will be complete. The demonic's activity will cease, except as an everlasting

Corinthians 6:3 hints when it queries, “Do you not know that we will judge angels?” (NASB) “In Christianity the office of judge is transferred also to Christ. And thus those who are ‘in Christ’ also have part in it.... [Verse 3] is couched in parallel terms and expands the idea to include even angels.” (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database. Clarification supplied.)

⁴¹⁵ Isaiah 24:21-22, NASB. “The defiled natural, inanimate world will feel the brunt of God's wrath, but so will all living creatures, especially those powers in heaven and earth that oppose God. Once these are defeated ‘in that day,’ God's final and victorious reign will be fully established. The purpose of God's final visitation will be to bring low the powers on earth (24:21, 22) and in the heavens (24:21, 23), leaving God himself as the reigning king (24:23b).... The heavenly hosts could refer to the stars and planets (40:26; 45:12; Ps 33:6), but it seems more likely that this is a reference to enemy angelic beings (2 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6; Dan 4:32; 8:10; 10:13), not inanimate objects. The parallelism between the two halves of this verse invites the comparison between the defeat of the powerful evil rulers on earth (21b) and the powerful rulers in heaven (21a). Once these are defeated God alone will rule the world.” (Smith, Gary V. *Isaiah 1-39*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴¹⁶ Matthew 8:29, NASB. “The demons' subsequent question (in the verse)... is interesting from at least two respects: first, in it the demons recognize that at the eschatological judgment they will experience God's judgment and the end of their power... and second, they recognize that [the time] has not yet come; Jesus has in effect come too early and threatens their realm too soon...” (Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 1-13*, Page 227. Clarification supplied.)

recipient of God's holy wrath. As Jesus said, Satan and his angels will enter the judgment prepared for them.⁴¹⁷

5.4.2 The Demonic's Ontological Status

After our sizeable survey of the various activities of the demonic, the reasonable response is this: Who or what are these demons? While the discussion and debate about their personhood will feature in the next section (5.4.3), we will concern ourselves at this time with the ontological qualities of the demonic. What is their nature? What are their abilities? These and other questions loom, and only after a survey of their behavior are we now able to address these significant topics.

Are demons “real?” Are they personifications, myths, spirits, or a force? At first glance, this question may appear absurd, because the reader either hastily dismisses the demonic's reality or questions the idea that some would actually deny the demonic. Especially after our walk through the Scriptures concerning the activity of demons, it is rather counterintuitive to suggest that the Bible is not arguing for (or at least, supporting) the existence of demons, beings who interact with God, angels, and humanity.

Yet that is what some suggest. Perhaps the Word of God speaks figuratively concerning demons (and other spiritual beings)? Could they be literary features of a bygone era, myth which has no bearing on existence?

For instance, let us reflect on Schleiermacher's conception of the demonic. Perceiving the angelic realm as a myth, he insists, “Previously there was no alternative but to people either

⁴¹⁷ “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...” (Matthew 25:41, NASB.) “... hell fire was originally prepared for the devil and his angels as the fit punishment for their irremediable apostasy from God...” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, Page 997.)

the earth or the heavens [was filled] with hidden and spiritual beings.”⁴¹⁸ Schleiermacher’s alternative is startling. Concerning the angels, he says:

*Christ and the Apostles might have said all these things without having had any real conviction of the existence of such beings or any desire to communicate it, just as everyone adopts popular ideas and makes use of them in discussing other things, as, for example, we might talk of ghosts and fairies, although these ideas had no definite sort of relation to our actual convictions.*⁴¹⁹

Though angels can continue to be referenced in hymns, confessions, and Scripture, he leaves the reality of the angelic host as an unanswered and unimportant question, supposing that Christians will be less influenced by the subject as humanity’s “knowledge of the forces of nature” increases.⁴²⁰ It should then prove unsurprising that Schleiermacher’s skepticism overflows into the demonic (and Satan). “The idea of the Devil, as developed among us, is so unstable that we cannot expect anyone to be convinced of its truth...”⁴²¹ He again argues that such concepts will become “obsolete” in Christian usage as we continue to better understand “evil emotions” which arise within us in a “strange and abrupt manner.”⁴²² And then Schleiermacher culminates his curt tale on the demonic by advocating that as long as such references to evil are the norm in Christian circles, it can also be reflected in song. This is apparently appropriate, since “in poetry personification is quite in place.”⁴²³ Rather than a complete eradication of the subject in church life, Schleiermacher says it is “unjustifiable to wish to banish the conception of the devil from our treasury of song.”⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁸ Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*, Page 157.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, Page 158.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, Page 159.

⁴²¹ Ibid, Page 161.

⁴²² Ibid, Page 168.

⁴²³ Ibid, Pages 169-170.

⁴²⁴ Ibid, Page 170.

Unfortunately, others also agree with such sentiments which consign the demonic to something less than spiritual beings with power, ability, and intelligence, as displayed by their activities in the last section. For example, Barth's perspective on the matter is troublesome, as he defines the demonic's "origin and nature" as "nothingness."⁴²⁵ With this term that is foreign to the Scriptures, he burdens his analysis of the biblical texts with a philosophical concept. Thankfully, Barth will not toss aside the demonic as unreal; demons are not hurt by "questioning their existence."⁴²⁶ But even as he asserts that demons are real, they are not originally a creation of God. Rather they are treated as complex byproduct of the creation decree.⁴²⁷ Barth simultaneously treats them as personal beings yet undermines their character. However, this peculiar but elegant wordsmithing does not ring with biblical truth. As Bromiley articulates, Barth "lays himself open to criticism at a vital point: Is he really obeying scripture as the criterion of dogmatic purity and truth?"⁴²⁸

Instead, as we study the Scriptures, the Bible does identify the nature of the demonic. They are not mere personifications. In an effort to portray reality, they are called spirits, as the angels are termed spirits.⁴²⁹ The meticulous Luke, in the genre of historical narrative, provides this clarity as he synonymously utilizes "demon" and "spirit" in the same pericopes.

*In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice...*⁴³⁰

... He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept

⁴²⁵ Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*, III, 3, Page 522.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, Page 521.

⁴²⁷ Ibid, Page 523.

⁴²⁸ Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, Page 155.

⁴²⁹ "Are [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14, NASB. Clarification added.)

⁴³⁰ Luke 4:33, NASB. "Having in mind the use in Acts 17:18 of [*daimonion*] for 'deity,' it is perhaps best to see Luke as establishing here his basic vocabulary for possession... and in the negative sphere [spirit and demon] are interchangeable." (Nolland, John. *Luke 1-9:20*, Page 206. Clarification supplied.)

*under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.*⁴³¹

*While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.*⁴³²

Yet these spirits, both angels and demons, are not spirits in the sense that God is the Spirit. In Kato's booklet on the spirits, he expounds:

*God as Spirit is absolutely different from all other classes of spirits. He is the Creator.... So in our dealing with the origin of spirits, we must exclude God. Although He too is Spirit, He is the uncreated Spirit since He Himself did the creating. All other spirits are created beings.*⁴³³

Therefore, demons are finite, evil spirits which exist under the sovereignty and supremacy of the Infinite Spirit.

Do demons have a body? This question is difficult to answer from the biblical text. While a definite response probably cannot be ascertained, a couple of truths can be gleaned from the Scriptures. First, Satan and his demons have a flexibility of appearance, and this clouds the exact nature of their being. In Paul's explanation of how false teachers masquerade as true apostles, he includes:

*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ Luke 8:29, NASB.

⁴³² Luke 9:42, NASB. "Corresponding to the highly personal and heart-rending appeal of the father for his only child, Luke here speaks simply, but powerfully, of Jesus healing the child and handing him over to his father. The note of compassion comes strongly to the fore. Luke is happy to use the language of healing for exorcisms, but this does not mean that he confuses illness and exorcism..." (Nolland, John. *Luke 9:21-18:34*, Page 510.)

⁴³³ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 4.

⁴³⁴ Second Corinthians 11:13-15, NASB. "Satan can pose as an angel of light. It should not be surprising then if satanic evil infiltrates a church and deludes it. The argument runs, if Satan disguises himself with

If we combine this with the indwelling capabilities of the demonic (which includes animals), it leaves us with the impression that we should carefully weigh and test our interactions, even if they are apparently respectable. (Sadly, this did not occur in the garden.) Second, demons are probably able to actualize. Apart from indwelling a physical being, they can appear and interact in the physical realm. When holy angels visited Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18-19, they ate and conversed as humans.⁴³⁵ In that light, when the devil arrives to tempt Christ in the wilderness, the logical conclusion is that Satan presented himself in a physical form to interact with Jesus. Thus, even though we acknowledge that demons can appear in physical form, we simply do not have the biblical material to conclude if they have a body of some other kind.

Are demons all the same? No. While Satan and his demons are all engaged in similarly wicked activities, some distinction exists between them. The primary difference is in their varying levels of evil. In addition to the difficult texts (1 Peter 3:19, Jude 1:6) which mention the exceptionally vile spirits who are currently imprisoned for their behavior, the gospels also indicate a gradation of evil spirits as well.⁴³⁶ We must return to Luke, which contains some unusually specific information about demonic traits, as he quotes Jesus.

the raiment of righteousness, then so will his minions. The rivals are no different from the master they serve.” (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴³⁵ Genesis 18:8 depicts them eating, but it is not until 19:1 that they are identified as angels. Lest we merely reckon them to be human messengers, we observe their unusual abilities in 19:11 when they repel the licentious men of the city. “Unlike the suddenness of the visitors’ appearance before Abraham, hinting at their otherworldly origin... the angels are received simply as common travelers without any detection by Lot. Not until the angels blind the Sodomites do they show their supernatural character (vv. 10-11).” (Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴³⁶ “In the NT the word ‘spirits’... is used overwhelmingly to refer not to human dead but to supernatural beings, primarily malevolent.... There is a clear Jewish tradition... in which the angelic beings of Gen 6:1–6, whose disobedience caused the flood, were subsequently imprisoned.... That it is this tradition which underlies the reference to ‘spirits’ in our verse seems therefore likely to be the case.” (Achtmeier, Paul J., and Eldon Jay Epp. *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.) “We can be almost certain that Jude referred here to the sin of the angels in Gen 6:1-4.” (Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.) In a survey of the positions taken on the text in 1 Peter 3:19, Bauckham mentions, “Second, the ‘spirits in prison’ are angelic beings, which the word ‘spirits’ alone (rather than ‘spirits of...’) probably most naturally suggests (though human spirits is not at

*When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.*⁴³⁷

A demon exits a host, aiming for rest. In the end, choosing to return to its prior abode is preferable, and a demonic mob joins it. But the new associates are more evil, and man's state is drastically corrupted by this increase of residents, along with their intensely unclean quality. A gradation of evil exists among demons. Some are worse than others. In this sense, demons mirror humanity. All are sinners, but some are more prolific in quantity, intensity, and craftiness.

Demons can also be distinguished by their various states and locations. As the didactic narrative from Luke 11:24-26 illustrates, a demon can indwell a particular person, and this state is differentiated from a transient spirit which has no host. And, as mentioned earlier, demons can presumably enter an actualized state, wherein they take a form to interact in a physical manner. But all these categories only pertain to "free" or operational spirits. These are distinct from the bound, inoperative spirits which are not able to return to Earth, according to Jude 1:6.

Evil spirits can have different ranks and roles. Throughout the Bible, Satan is portrayed as a leader of the demonic horde. Hence, Revelation 12 even mentions "the dragon and his angels" warring in the grand battle with the archangel Michael and his angels, indicating Satan's

all an impossible meaning of the word)." (Bauckham, Richard. "Spirits in Prison," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume VI, Page 177.)

⁴³⁷ Luke 11:24-26, NASB. "... the returning demon provides himself with a whole set of demonic companions, each of whom outstrips the original dweller's capacity to inflict evil upon its host." (Nolland, John. *Luke 9:21-18:34*, Page 646.)

exalted position over the fallen angels as well as his possession of their loyalty.⁴³⁸ And even though we will avoid needless speculation which exceeds revelation, the concept of military organization is also inserted into the demonological field through the interaction of Jesus with “Legion.” When the Lord asked for a name, a spirit responded “My name is Legion; for we are many.”⁴³⁹ Of course, “legion” is more descriptive than anything else, as the demoniac was thoroughly demonized by a substantial number of demonic entities. But the text’s vacillation between singular and plural (“my” and “we” in Mark 5:9) implies that one spirit was probably operating as a representative or a leader of the demonic troop. Additionally, demons can cause different symptoms upon their demonized prey, depending on their role. For instance, Jesus cast out a “deaf and mute spirit” in Mark 9.⁴⁴⁰ And a woman who had apparently been debilitated by a demon is healed by Jesus in Luke 13, and she was freed to walk upright again.⁴⁴¹ In sum, demons are distinct beings with a variety of states, roles, and ranks.

How can a demon and a human inhabit the same space? This is a conceptual issue that does not have a direct biblical response. Indirectly, we can reason that two bodies cannot inhabit the same space, but demons function by differing parameters, as more than one can reside

⁴³⁸ Revelation 12:7, NASB. “As Satan was the general of the wicked angels in this battle, so Michael was the general of the holy angels.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation*, Page 374.) This possessive construction is also mirrored by Jesus in Matthew 25:41.

⁴³⁹ Mark 5:9, NASB. “Legion appears as a Latin loan word... A military term, it designates a unit or brigade in the Roman army including infantry and cavalry. The number varied between 4000 and 6000, but by Jesus’ day and during the time of the empire the number appears fixed at approximately 6000 men of whom nearly 5800 were infantry.” (Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26, Volume 34A*, Page 281.)

⁴⁴⁰ Mark 9:25, NASB. “Jesus commands, perhaps ironically, a deaf-mute spirit, and the spirit obeys.” (Evans, Craig A. *Mark 8:27-16:20*, Page 54.)

⁴⁴¹ Luke 13:11-13. While Nolland argues that this is a healing which idiomatically refers to a “spirit,” that seems to not fit the language of “having a spirit of infirmity,” at least in Luke’s usage. (Nolland, John. *Luke 9:21-18:34*, Pages 723-724.) Because of that, Stein’s explanation is preferred: “The woman is described as having an evil spirit that caused her crippled condition.” (Stein, Robert. H. *Luke*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

in a body.⁴⁴² It is no giant extrapolation to suggest then that two spirits (one human, one demonic) could indwell a single body.

5.4.3 The Demonic's Personal Nature

Rooted in our ontologically robust understanding of the demonic, the personhood of the demonic must consequently be upheld. Not only does the biblical text treat them as beings, but it paints them as persons. They are not only real beings (in contrast to an undefined force), but demons are conscripted as actors – antagonists – in the redemptive storyline of the Holy Writ, just as other persons are furnished. Impersonal concepts such as sin and atonement are wielded by characters, and impersonal beings (i.e. animals) serve in narratives. But demons function differently.

How do demons interact on a personal level? The narratives of Scripture describe many person-to-person interactions between demons and others. From the beginning of Scripture until its final pages, Satan's deceptive intelligence is on display as he converses with Eve and as he argues with Michael. The demons spout their unusual knowledge throughout the Gospels, testifying to the heavenly identity of Jesus of Nazareth.

Consider the scathing criticism of James to inert followers of Christ: "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."⁴⁴³ The shape and substance of

⁴⁴² In addition to the demoniac and the legion of demons, Mary Magdalene also had a history of hosting multiple demons, presumably at the same time (Luke 8:2).

⁴⁴³ James 2:19, NASB. "James equated faith without works with mere assent to the truth of God's existence.... Even the demons possess this kind of faith. This claim, perhaps, is an allusion to demons' role as influences in the creation of false religion, what Paul described as 'doctrines of demons' (1 Tim 4:10). They could be said to perform miracles and receive worship through the practice of idolatry. James' reference to 'demonic faith' can hardly be complimentary. The demons also have monotheistic belief. They know of the reality of God, but they are still malevolent. Many believe that which is true about the Deity, but orthodoxy may have no effect on the evil activities of their lives. The only effect on

James' argument demands that humans and demons have a similar capacity for belief and intelligence as personal beings. But the demons' faith is crippled, divorced from any holy and happy relationship with God, and thus they "shudder," only having a belief in God that further confirms their doom. Therefore, unless we begin to manipulate the text itself, the Scriptures supply demons as persons who behave in similar ways to humanity, and this upgrades them from a real yet impersonal influence or entity.

Probably the best indication of the personhood of the demonic is the personal means by which they interact with and affect humanity. While their other behaviors (5.4.1) have a personal quality, nothing is as stark as their practice of inhabitation. Saul, Judas, Mary Magdalene, a slave girl, the Gentile demoniac – these and more all experienced the horrors of advanced demonization, wherein a wicked spirit neared/entered their body and assumed some level of control and influence. In the case of Saul, the evil spirit's intermittent presence led to rage.

*Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.*⁴⁴⁴

*Now it came about on the next day (after killing Goliath) that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul's hand. Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence twice.*⁴⁴⁵

the demons is that they 'shudder' at the thought of God's existence and his power over them." (Richardson, Kurt A. *James*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁴⁴ First Samuel 16:14, NASB. "Saul's tortured state was not an accident of nature, nor was it essentially a medical condition. It was a supernatural assault by a being sent at the Lord's command, and it was brought on by Saul's disobedience." (Bergen, Robert D. *1,2 Samuel*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁴⁵ First Samuel 18:10-11, NASB. Clarification added. Saul had become like Goliath, threatening the anointed of God. "Like Goliath (cf. 1 Sam 17:7), a previous adversary of David, 'Saul had a spear in his hand.'" (Bergen, Robert D. *1,2 Samuel*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

Satan entered Judas to empower and culminate Jesus' betrayal. We do not even know the troubles that seven spirits may have imposed upon Mary Magdalene! And of course, the slave girl of Philippi was granted a sinister bondage to occult ability which perpetual oppression by her owners. Finally, the demoniac of Mark 5 was accosted into self-mutilation, nakedness, and ostracization. These were personal effects guided by malevolent, demonic persons.

5.4.4 The Demonic's Corporate Influence

Even as we have defended the personhood of the demonic, we must recognize that their existence as a cohered, malevolent entity, has astonishing corporate effects, and the Bible depicts these without diminishing their reality or personality. This is couched in the original fall of humanity, wherein the entire race has been tainted through Adam's sin and Satan's guile. The corporate effects of that demonic deceit are incalculable. But looking beyond humanity as a whole, what are some other ongoing corporate targets of Satan and the demonic host? The Bible highlights four in particular.

Family. The building block of society is the family, and from a strategic standpoint, it is only logical to influence the family, where the effects of demonic interference can last for generations. After the fall, we do not have to look far. Cain slew his own brother. The first epistle of John comments:

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his

*brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.*⁴⁴⁶

While no dialogue is recorded between Cain and Satan, John has no trouble tracing Cain's behavior back to the machinations of the demonic overlord. This does not erase Cain's culpability for his actions, but it does locate his malicious desires at their ultimate source. To use the biblical phraseology, Cain was a child of the devil, heeding his purposes for the world and for the family. Lutzer sums it up this way:

*The Serpent's first attack was against a family and was an attempt to kill a righteous man. The attack was the expression of a religious conflict between two brothers, one of whom could not be content to see the other prosper. Behind the human dynamics was the struggle between God and Satan, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent.*⁴⁴⁷

The demonic's impact is observed in the marriage relationship as well. Paul warns about this, prescribing that sexual abstinence within marriage demands careful regulation. Why? Satan will surreptitiously seize upon one's lack of "self-control" to promote infidelity and divorce.⁴⁴⁸

Additionally, other cases exist where Satan's work affected the family. As we read the gospels, we can almost hear the desperation of the demonized persons' relatives. One especially brutal instance of satanic involvement was with Job. Satan received the necessary permission

⁴⁴⁶ First John 3:10-12, NASB. "Cain belonged to the evil one, to the devil, a thought that apparently is derived from Gen 4:7, where God warns Cain that 'sin is crouching at your door.'... Cain demonstrated the defining actions of his spiritual father (cf. 3:10)." (Akin, Daniel L. *1,2,3 John*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁴⁷ Lutzer, Erwin W. *The Serpent of Paradise*, Page 72.

⁴⁴⁸ First Corinthians 7:5, NASB. "Paul would permit and advise only temporary abstinence with a religious background and is very frank in stating the reason, 'on account of your incontinence.'... Satan is here pictured as being constantly on the watch to bring Christ's followers to fall. It must be our purpose to thwart his nefarious attempts." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, Page 279.)

from God to trouble Job. But it is still a shock when we read that Job's children were killed in the course of this testing.⁴⁴⁹

Before we move on, we must also address the subject of familial or familiar spirits. Are there evil spirits which develop a relationship with a particular occult dabbler and his family? The term "familiar spirit" arises from the Old Testament prohibitions concerning necromancy. Arguing that no human spirits are contacted, Dickason says:

*Some are persuaded that certain mediums can make contact with the spirits of deceased humans. From this they receive comfort and revelation. It results in pride, deception, and bondage to occult powers. Consulting with those who had familiar spirits or with wizards was banned in Israel (Lev 19:31; Deu 18:10-11). Corrupt religions about them practiced such things, but Israel would commit apostasy in turning to them.*⁴⁵⁰

But, as with many subjects pertaining to demonic strategies and practices, the Scripture is largely silent on the particulars. The Bible has no need to portray these things in detail. Instead, discretion and discernment is left to us, being aware of Satan's schemes and mindful of their many incarnations in our time. And judging by how corruptive the influence of Satan can be in a family (i.e. Adam and Eve), it certainly seems plausible, biblically speaking, that children (i.e. Cain) and following generations would be haunted (literally or figuratively) by their parent's forays into the illicit supernatural world.

⁴⁴⁹ Job 1:18-19. "The first and third calamities were from human enemies. The second and fourth were from natural causes (although all four calamities were caused by the Satan, according to Job 1-2). In v. 16 it was the 'fire of God,' and here it is a 'mighty wind.' The wind came across the desert, indicating the sirocco, a hot sandy wind that blows predominately at the beginning and the end of summer." (Alden, Robert L. *Job*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁵⁰ Dickason, C. Fred. *Angels: Elect and Evil*, Page 199.

False Religion. Satan and his servants seek worship. Worship is what Satan tried to win from Jesus in the wilderness temptation.⁴⁵¹ As we argued in 5.4.1, demons stand behind the various belief systems which oppose the one true God of the Bible, for as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 10, it is actually demons who undergird idolatrous religion. They are the “so-called gods” and “lords” whom we are to reject for the Father Creator and Jesus Christ.

*For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.*⁴⁵²

But in addition to the corporate effects of false belief, demonic powers are responsible for the tragic and heinous acts which spawn from various false religions. One persistent biblical warning pertains to the religious rite of infant sacrifice. God abhors the practice; it is the lowest depths of abomination to discard voiceless human life to appease false gods. The Scripture declares:

*You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.*⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ Matthew 4:9. “Again the devil tries to detour Jesus away from the will of the Father, offering him something that is within his rights (cf. 28:18), but as the following clause shows, at the cost of idolatry... What Jesus received from the magi... Satan desires from Jesus... As in the very first account of testing, failed by Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-7), the question centers on a choice between the will of Satan or the will of God, which involves implicitly the rendering of worship to the one or the other. Satan indeed vaults himself as god in place of the only God. (Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 1-13*, Page 68.)

⁴⁵² First Corinthians 8:5-6, NASB. “In v 4 he acknowledged the rightness of the Corinthians’ thesis that the gods do not exist; he merely stated it to be inadequate. Here, on the other hand, he qualifies his concession: there ‘are’ ‘gods’ and ‘lords.’... Paul indicates *his* criticism, not only of pagan belief in the gods, but of the gods themselves, first of all by using the word... “so-called.” They may very well be existent in the sense of being “there” in the world and having a certain power—and Paul himself is convinced that they do exist. But they are not gods. The explanation is provided by Gal 4:8.” (Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

⁴⁵³ Leviticus 18:21, NASB. Leviticus 20:1-5 further details God’s hatred toward the practice. “Support for the interpretation that child sacrifice is what is in view is provided by 2 Kings 23:10 and Jer 7:31. In these texts ‘burning’ is equated with the expression to cause the children to ‘pass through the fire.’” (Rooker, Mark F. *Leviticus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

*... beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?" You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.*⁴⁵⁴

*Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter? You slaughtered My children and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire.*⁴⁵⁵

*They (The Northern Kingdom of Israel) forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him.*⁴⁵⁶

This detestable form of worship was a plague throughout the ancient world. Heider attests, "Both classical and patristic writers testify to a cult of child sacrifice, particularly in times of military emergency, in Phoenicia and at Carthage."⁴⁵⁷ These "tophets" or locations of sacrifice were aplenty, as evidenced by the archeological excavation of "the remains of children" in

⁴⁵⁴ Deuteronomy 12:30-31, NASB. "To serve other gods is tantamount to aberrant worship, for denial of the uniqueness of the Lord leaves one open to a pluralism of faith and action that knows virtually no limits. To use an extreme example, Moses cited the practice of human sacrifice, a rite exacerbated by the use of one's own children as offerings. Such unspeakable forms of religious expression were common in the ancient Near Eastern world, especially in Canaan, and tragically enough sometimes were emulated by God's own elect nation..." (Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁵⁵ Ezekiel 16:20-21, NASB. "Children also were sacrificed to pagan gods such as Molech, a practice strictly forbidden in the law.... These practices mark a climax of the surrender of the fundamental convictions of the ancient faith of Yahweh in favor of Canaanite heathenism." (Cooper, Lamar Eugene. *Ezekiel*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁵⁶ Second Kings 17:16-17, NASB. Clarification supplied. "They practiced worship rites connected with pagan deities. More specifically, they bowed down before Baal and the Canaanite astral gods. Some of them offered human sacrifices." (House, Paul R. *1,2 Kings*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁵⁷ Heider, G.C. "Molech," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Page 582.

various sites like “Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa.”⁴⁵⁸ And the biblical evidence, while a few try to slightly soften the texts into pagan baby dedications (who became temple prostitutes), reflects that immolations took place. “Most scholars, however, remain persuaded that actual sacrifice by fire was involved...”⁴⁵⁹

While most would be fine with asserting that such behavior is demonic in some sense, the Scriptures themselves declare that such sacrifices are actually received by demons. Demons are behind this religiously motivated infanticide.

[Israel] *sacrificed to demons who were not God,
To gods whom they have not known,
New gods who came lately,
Whom your fathers did not dread.*⁴⁶⁰
[Israel] *even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons,
And shed innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with the blood.*⁴⁶¹

And due to the demonic’s relationship with religious movements and their practices, we should take great care at not imitating the Israelites. Let us avoid syncretism, refusing to return to the slavery of demonic entities who are not gods!

Church. Throughout the New Testament, deceitful spirits aim to pollute and corrupt the church of Jesus Christ. Satan and the demons are the enemy of the church, but ultimately, God’s

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, Page 583.

⁴⁶⁰ Deuteronomy 32:17, NASB. Clarification added. See the next footnote for additional comments.

⁴⁶¹ Psalm 106:37-38, NASB. Clarification added. Unger elucidates these texts and the usage of the term demon, saying, “Demons do exist, first and foremost, for God in His Word says that they exist. That the *shedhim* (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:36-37) of the Old Testament were real demons, and not mere idols, is proven by the Septuagint translation of the term by *diamonia* (demons); the Jews regarded idols as demons who allowed themselves to be worshipped by men (Bar. 4:7; LXX Ps. 95:5; 1 Cor. 10:20.” (Unger, Merrill F. *Biblical Demonology*, Page 36.)

people will prevail in Christ. Yet, in the meantime, Satan continues to influence and affect through a number of means.

The first is through the introduction of false teaching. Paul warns Timothy (and us) that some visible members of the church will fall away, “paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”⁴⁶² This propagates through the “hypocrisy of liars” and false prophets.⁴⁶³ First John even says that the origin of false prophets includes deceitful spirits.⁴⁶⁴ The second means the demonic employs in harassing the church is the promotion of immorality. Preying on our human desires, attempting to undermine biblical sexuality (1 Corinthians 7:5) is one example. But finally, a prominent means of the demonic’s influence on the church is through division. Writing to the tumultuous congregation of Corinth, Paul voices his concerns in the midst of attempting to stir reconciliation and forgiveness.

*But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² First Timothy 4:1, NASB. “Paul’s concluding statement of v. 1 located the source of the deceitful teachings in demonic influence. Satan’s ability to enlist Judas to do his will shows his competence to influence belief and behavior (Luke 22:3).” (Lea, Thomas D., and Hayne P. Griffin Jr. *1,2 Timothy, Titus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁶³ First Timothy 4:2, NASB. “Paul described the false teachers who practiced misleading the Ephesians. It was these false teachers whom the demons were using to carry out their bidding. First, Paul pictured their treachery by denouncing them as hypocrites. They presented themselves as pious followers of Christ, but they were in reality glib tools of the devil.” (Lea, Thomas D., and Hayne P. Griffin Jr. *1,2 Timothy, Titus*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁶⁴ “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1, NASB.) “The author takes for granted the existence of a variety of spirits. In what follows it will be apparent that this multiplicity of *pneumata* is at work especially in the preaching of the false prophets. . . . Thus the community is warned not to submit itself to the various spirits, but to maintain a critical distance from them, that is, to ‘test’ them. The purpose of this testing is to determine ‘whether they are from God’ . . . This was the common attitude of the primitive Christian church, in its earliest days, toward ‘heresy.’” (Strecker, Georg, and Harold W. Attridge. *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*. Hermeneia, Logos Database.)

⁴⁶⁵ Second Corinthians 2:10-11, NASB. “[Satan] hoped to frustrate the whole blessed work that had been done in Corinth and to deliver a stunning blow to Paul. These evil results would spread to even other

When Satan assails the church through his many schemes (in this case, to divide and destroy through a lack of forgiveness), the best defense is to stand united, for as Garland states on this text, “Satan is powerless before a united community filled with love and humble forgiveness.”⁴⁶⁶ The demonic powers are the enemies of reconciliation, and “Satan fans the flames of hurt into an inferno of hostility.”⁴⁶⁷ The church may be an earthly safehouse from the rule of Satan, but it is not excluded from the demonic’s influential schemes.

Politics. Since the Scriptures label the spiritual powers as “rulers,” it only logically follows that they would intervene into the political affairs of the nations. The nation of Israel had a couple of instances. As we discussed earlier, an evil spirit harassed the first royal of the Israelite kingdom. Yet, even when his far superior successor ascended to the throne, David also was influenced, and the incident led to devastating national consequences. First Chronicles 21:1 records, “Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.”⁴⁶⁸ While Satan is not mentioned in the parallel passage (2 Samuel 24:1), this work of Satan in Chronicles is left unexplained, though we may assume the norm that “Satan remained malevolent and his intentions were always destructive of God’s people.”⁴⁶⁹

Daniel 10 is a crucial text for analyzing the angelic and demonic forces which engage behind political movements. These princes are associated with their peoples (with Michael being identified as a prince for Israel). Michael is warring against the demonic beings which represent current and future political entities that would clash with Israel (Persia, then Greece).

Then [Gabriel] said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the

congregations.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, Page 891. Clarification supplied.)

⁴⁶⁶ Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ NASB.

⁴⁶⁹ Zuber, Kevin D. *The Moody Bible Commentary*, Page 572.

*prince of Greece is about to come. However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.*⁴⁷⁰

Miller comments on this unusual passage of Scripture:

*The angel added that later “the prince of Greece will come,” implying that he would fight against this prince also. In keeping with the identification of the previously mentioned prince of Persia, “the prince of Greece” would be Satan or one of his demons. This evil spirit would come later when the empire of Greece rose to power, indicating that the angelic conflict would continue into the time of the Greek Empire.*⁴⁷¹

The following chapter of Daniel then prophetically details the political struggles that would come. The link is straightforward in chapters 10 and 11 of Daniel: The actions of supernatural beings corresponded to the political environment which would shape the present and future of Israel.

We can also tease out the demonic’s relationship with politics from other texts as well. In the temptation of Christ in Matthew 4:8-9, Satan wagers the nations for Jesus’ worship, implying that he has supremacy and influence over them. This was not an empty bargain. Having been foiled by Jesus’ resistance, Satan is ultimately stripped of his deceptive power over the nations in Revelation 20:1-3, though he briefly is able to muster a foolhardy rebellion in verses 7-10. According to the Scriptures, the demonic surely influences corporate groups.

For many pages, we have surveyed the biblical content concerning the demonic. Their activity was prioritized, since the Bible primarily focuses on their behavior. Building on that material, we then analyzed their nature as beings which are both real and personal. We also highlighted their influence in the corporate spheres – the family, false religions, the church, and

⁴⁷⁰ Daniel 10:20-21, NASB. Clarification added. The translators of the NASB helpfully furnish “Satanic angel” as the implied meaning for the opposing princes.

⁴⁷¹ Miller, Stephen R. *Daniel*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

political authorities. But why does this all matter for us? May we now focus on the purpose of this demonology.

5.5 The Purpose of an Evangelical Demonology

At this beginning of this work we asked a question. It befits us to repeat it again. “Why demonology?” Then we quickly assessed how living in this world and reading the Bible virtually presents the question as unavoidable. In one sense, we all answer the question, with varying degrees of perspicuity.

We have arrived at a juncture where we have more thoroughly rehearsed the biblical materials concerning the demonic. Demonological study has been done, but the task is left to show exactly how it affects us. Evangelical demonology has a purpose, and we are not left unchanged. With that in mind, let us address four realms in which demonology matters, and our demonological efforts should assist and inform these fields.

5.5.1 Biblical Reliability

Does the Bible mean what it says? When commentaries line up to confirm that the original context and the biblical authors depict a reality which includes demonic beings who interact with humans, do we then attempt to temper the impact of that news? Our approach and attitude toward biblical demonology is a significant signpost for our bibliology. Is the Bible and its worldview reliable concerning the demonic? Does it portray the facts about the supernatural world, which are still true today? If the biblical witness concerning the demonic is merely a myth which has no bearing on reality, what else in Scriptures amounts to a fable as well? It is a

slippery slope, and demonology is an easy place to begin the slide, especially for the Western mind. Giant issues hang upon these subsidiary doctrines of demonology.

Is this wrangling trivial? If we cede the demonic (as we have portrayed it) to the rubbish heap of history, perhaps it is no huge loss if one Christian deems the demonic mythical while another asserts its reality? But Unger vigorously unearths the true dangers that lurk in the redefinition of the demonic.

... there is not a hint that Jesus or any of the New Testament writers had the slightest doubt as to the real existence of either Satan or demons.... Only slight investigation is necessary to expose the extreme crudity, destructiveness, and untenability of the rationalistic and mythical view of Satan and demons. It not only jeopardizes the character and truthfulness of the Son of God himself, but challenges the authenticity and reliability of the whole Bible. For if the teachings of Scripture on the subject of Satan and demons are judged mythical, any other doctrine of Holy Writ may likewise be declared mythical at the caprice of the critic, who is disposed to offset his opinions against those of the prophets, apostles, and the Lord Himself.⁴⁷²

Unger's comprehensive remarks from 1952 leave little room for improvement, nearly sixty-five years later. Much is lost when biblical demonology is unceremoniously transformed into a figment, a moral, or a symbol. In this arena of study and many others, the Scripture's intention is effortlessly trumped by the interpreter's opinion, culture, or philosophy. Thus, Evangelical demonology serves in upholding biblical reliability.

5.5.2 Soteriological Quality

Why does demonology matter? It ensures that we have a well-rounded soteriology. In 4.2, we outlined the parameters of a systematic doctrine of salvation. The *Evangelical*

⁴⁷² Unger, Merrill F. *Biblical Demonology*, Pages 36-37.

Dictionary of Theology was specifically hosted as an interlocutor, but it was found to be deficient, largely overlooking the demonic's relationship with soteriology.⁴⁷³ Our deliverance from Satan and his cronies is hardly mentioned.

How exactly does our Evangelical demonology realign our soteriology? Yes, we affirm Jesus' penal substitutionary death on the cross, propitiating the Father's wrath against sin and sinners, but a biblically refreshed demonology challenges us to elaborate on our predominantly demon-less soteriology in our Protestant formulations. What specifically demands reevaluation? Let us consider that question under three primary branches.

The first branch pertains to that from which we are saved. Recognizing that the world is dominated and ruled by false gods, our soteriology must be reshaped. We not only live in a sinful world; we inhabit a realm of demonic powers. "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."⁴⁷⁴ Satan snatches away the truth, according to Mark's gospel.⁴⁷⁵ The idolatries and religious systems which organize and saturate the nations are orchestrated by Satan and his affiliates.

This begs the question. How do we transfer from the demonically-controlled dominion of the devil? The Scripture states that such a handover takes place. Paul mentions this in Colossians 1:13-14, which says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness

⁴⁷³ White, R. E. O. "Salvation," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Page 969.

⁴⁷⁴ Second Corinthians 4:4, NASB. "Paul must be referring to Satan as the god of this age. He classifies Satan as a 'god' because he has a dominion, however limited by the one true God, and has subjects whom Paul labels 'unbelievers.'" (Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

⁴⁷⁵ Mark 4:15. "Through the ears the Word 'has been sown into them,' and... is now lying in the minds of these hearers but does not stay there to do its blessed work. Satan, moved by his inordinate wickedness and opposition to God, snatches the sown Word away from these hearers." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, Page 172.)

of sins.”⁴⁷⁶ As a preacher of the gospel of Jesus, Paul was specifically commanded to turn persons from “the dominion of Satan to God.”⁴⁷⁷ Commenting on these texts from Colossians and Acts, Melick declares, “In Christ, God invaded Satan’s territory and delivered people.”⁴⁷⁸ As Kato argues (see section 4.4 and 5.2), two kingdoms exist, and Christ’s gospel is the exclusive remedy for Satan’s power.

Christ accomplished all of this by the cross, paying the penalty for sin! Who can bring a charge against those who have been justified by Christ? As described in Colossians 2 and Galatians 4, the rules and regulations which the demonic powers once manipulated against humanity as chains are loosed by our full and final redemption in Jesus Christ.

The second branch relates to how we are being saved. Our ongoing sanctification and growth in godliness is not merely a battle against our sinful desires and the corporate patterns of our age. Through our daily lives as followers of Christ and members of His kingdom, we are warring with demonic powers on the personal, familial, corporate, and national levels. Paul explains exactly how we have been equipped for such a conflict with “spiritual forces in the heavenly places” in Ephesians 6 – the provided armor of God. We are therefore urged to primarily battle through holy and obedient living, resting on the resources secured through the cross – righteousness, truth, peace, faith, salvation, the Spirit, and access to God in prayer. As the yeast of kingdom of God is kneaded into this world through evangelism and missions (to borrow imagery from Jesus’ parable in Matthew 13:33), Satan and the other demonic powers are increasingly exposed as false gods – no gods – with laws and practices that only enslave.

⁴⁷⁶ NASB. “... to the Father’s making us fit, rescuing, and transferring us there is now added what has been bestowed upon us sinners to make us fit for the kingdom of the Son: ‘in connection with whom (faith making this connection) we have the ransoming, the forgiveness of sins’ which once held us bound under the authority of the darkness.” (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon*, Page 43.)

⁴⁷⁷ Acts 26:18, NASB.

⁴⁷⁸ Melick, Richard R. *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.

The third branch speaks to how we will be saved – eschatological soteriology. Our renewed demonology reminds us that this aspect of salvation must also be well-rounded. Ultimately, the kingdom of God and its King will come, and every evil power will be thrown down, as the true Lord establishes His dominion and vindicates His right to rule, unseating the cruel spiritual masters of this world. And by His grace, we will crush Satan with Christ (Romans 16:19), fulfilling the proto-evangelium. Thus, salvation, from first to last, only has its proper form when it is shaped in partnership with a robust demonology.

5.5.3 Pastoral Necessity

An Evangelical demonology is not a mere academic exercise. The biblical texts on the demonic should be constructed into a systematic doctrine, but that dogma is not without pastoral purpose. Demonology is practical. Though this is not exhaustive, here are four areas where demonology should be pastorally applied.

First, demonology prepares us to defend, not merely against impersonal principles but against strategic evil beings. Focusing on defending the biblical material concerning the demonic, Calvin remarks:

*We must here likewise refute those who foolishly allege that devils are nothing but bad affections or perturbations suggested by our carnal nature.... The subject, however, deserved to be touched upon, lest any, by embracing that error, should imagine they have no enemy, and thereby be more remiss or less cautious in resisting.*⁴⁷⁹

Calvin's underlying point is that the denigration of demonology (and by extension, the neglect of demonology) causes some to overlook the dangers and stop resisting the demonic powers. The

⁴⁷⁹ Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1, XIV, Section 19, Pages 155-156.

biblical material on the demonic, including the description of their abilities and the extent of their powers, should press us into action. Proper demonology mobilizes Christians, prodding them into faithful living and heartfelt evangelism.

Second, demonology trains us to show compassion to the lost. While we are often quick to brand sinners as obstinate and twisted, the reality of demonic activity and their power over the religious and national structures of this world reminds us that those without Jesus are oppressed and blinded by Satan, worthy of mercy and liberty in keeping with the ministry of Christ. As we once were stolen from the fetters of the enemy, we are now agents of freedom, releasing those who are bound in sin under the dominion of demons.⁴⁸⁰

Third, demonology warns us concerning the tangible dangers of syncretism, universalism, and occultism. Since the demonic is inherently invested in deceiving the human race and perpetuating a global rule that is counter to Christ, the other religious and occult options of the nations should have no allure to us. While we may be tempted to consider them innocuous, biblical teachings about the demonic underscore the real threat that lies behind other cultic systems. In the words of Paul to the Galatians, “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?”⁴⁸¹ May we who know the

⁴⁸⁰ We should also briefly remark upon the phenomenon of gender disparity. In cases of apparent demonic oppression, women tend to be uniquely afflicted. Against the backdrop of primarily male leadership in the church, this can exacerbate a perception of gender superiority, where men must assist women. While caution is merited, let us also remember that demonic powers prey upon the vulnerable and powerless. In many societies, that predominantly (and regrettably) pertains to women and children. Thus, the phenomenon should in some ways be expected, though we should be empowering women to counsel and assist other women.

⁴⁸¹ Galatians 4:9, NASB. “All of this has happened to the Galatians by the grace of God, and yet they were in danger of subjecting themselves to a bondage similar to that from which they had been delivered. But how could this be? Had the Galatians actually renounced their Christian faith? Had they recanted their baptismal vows? Did they no longer believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah? Certainly not! The temptation they faced, prompted by the Judaizing false teachers, was to doubt that Jesus Christ *alone* was sufficient for salvation. They were being told that it was necessary to add to their faith in Christ

true God never return to our old overlords through syncretism or occultism, nor affirm or accept them through universalism.

Fourth, demonology exalts and glorifies Christ in the hearts of the redeemed, leading to worship. The false gods who ruled us, the demons who harassed us, the powers who seemed invincible – these were resoundingly defeated by the pierced hands of Jesus. Christians should be thoroughly convinced of the loving compassion of God through the picture of the cross, and they should be fully cognizant of His matchless power through the defeat of the demonic host. When one is demoralized in the face of human and spiritual opposition, biblical demonology reconfirms the just power of God. Demons are defeated creatures, and their time is limited by the impending powerful exertion of God’s wrath, even as the other evils of this age persist yet for a little while. In every trial and season, we can exalt Christ as the power above all others.

With these four applications in mind, how can we simply neglect the biblical portrayal of the demonic? By avoiding or denigrating demonology, theological and pastoral deficiency is a result. Christ’s victory over the demonic is not only a triumph on paper; it empowers a Christian’s triumph in life.

5.5.4 Multicultural Sensitivity

Evangelicals ought to uphold a robust yet restrained demonology, for it results in the best relationship with the contemporary sociological phenomenon of multiculturalism – many cultures inhabiting and integrating within the same space. This is a growing norm across the globe. If we compromise, omit, or overemphasize demonology, Christianity quickly falls into

circumcision and other outdated ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Yet to do this, Paul said, would be no different than succumbing to their former subservient obedience to the elemental spirits of the world.” (George, Timothy. *Galatians*. NAC, PC Study Bible Database.)

treacherous waters. First, if we blatantly omit demonology, treating it as an unneeded and unimportant subject, we openly fracture our multicultural Christian communities (e.g. churches, seminaries, parachurch organizations) by alienating Christians who have experiences and cultural backgrounds which involve the demonic. As Ferdinando says, “Most peoples, for most of history, have believed in spirits, witchcraft and sorcery,” and since our Scriptures speak to activity and reality of those spirits, we should not shy away from the subject.⁴⁸² Second, if we compromise our demonology and repackage it according to a particular cultural philosophy, we communicate a message of arrogance. Instead of the Bible speaking, a culture (especially the West) is holding precedence over the others. This is catastrophic when attempting to establish and maintain healthy multicultural unity among believers. Third, if we overemphasize the demonic by sensationalizing and exalting the demonic’s influence in the world, we risk transforming the Christian theology of triumph over the demonic into a pagan dualism. We could invalidate the very community itself, recreating a dogma that does not represent the Holy Writ.

In contrast to the innumerable snares of lesser options, a biblically derived Evangelical demonology safeguards multicultural Christian communities. With the Bible held high, every Christian from every culture can join together, trusting that God’s view of the demonic is presented and that no culture is granted supremacy. Rather, every cultural and religious perspective is sifted, producing areas of continuity (where the preceding cultural paradigm agrees with Scripture) and discontinuity (where the preceding cultural paradigm is revised by Scripture).

⁴⁸² Ferdinando, Keith. *The Triumph of Christ in African Perspective: A Study of Demonology and Redemption in the African Context*, Page 376.

This should remind us of the second contribution (5.2) we brought forth from our study of Kato. Kato's biblicism sets the proper foundation for theologizing in the multicultural context, especially demonology as a culturally conditioned subject. In our demonology, we do not attempt to enshrine our own cultural framework into Christianity. Rather, we try to represent the biblical material, empowering it to both rebuke and affirm our cultural tenets. If we wish to be sensitive and encouraging to the multicultural Christian community, we must present a truly *biblical* demonology.

5.6 The Challenges to an Evangelical Demonology

Theological and philosophical diversity is perhaps one of the defining attributes of our time. One does not need to rigorously search to discover variety when we enter the arena of demonology. Even works like *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views* fail to encompass the assortment of options, as the book does not represent the peculiarities of other authors we have mentioned in this work (e.g. Barth, Unger, Ferdinando).

In producing an Evangelical demonology, we are joining a well-populated field, including Kato, Ferdinando, Unger, Dickason, Lutzer, Powlison, and others. Charismatic authors (e.g. Wagner and Murphy) fall into this category as well. While this particular work aims to be uniquely framed, especially by granting precedence to the activity of the demonic and focusing on multicultural ramifications of producing demonology, this demonology is not alone.

What challenges have been levied against Evangelical demonologies in general and what will be raised against this one in particular? Let us examine three common objections concerning Evangelical theology and its portrayal of the demonic.

5.6.1 The Challenge of Skepticism

Why believe in unseen demonic beings at all? The biting skepticism of many harshly erases what seems to be the unenlightened inclusion of spirits into the biblical narratives.

Bufford, the author of *Counseling and the Demonic*, outlines two common reactions to the demonic.

*According to the first view, demons are everywhere. Those who believe this are preoccupied with demons and with efforts to appease, avoid, or escape them. The second view discounts demons, looking on them as irrelevant, at best, or even as nonexistent. Both of these views are mistaken.*⁴⁸³

He goes on to assert that the second view seems “prevalent in Western culture at the present time.”⁴⁸⁴

Such an outright denial is difficult within Christian theological circles, since the demonic does arise in the biblical literature. Skepticism takes another form, discarding ontologically personal demons for a redefined understanding of such “forces.” While we will not rehash the works of Schleiermacher and Barth (which we treated in 5.3.2), a brief look at Berkhof’s *Christ and the Powers* is merited.

To begin with, Berkhof should be commended for treating the powers with seriousness. While others would ignore it, he does not. Instead, Berkhof looks at the background of Paul’s powers theology, citing texts like Daniel 10 as important precursors.⁴⁸⁵ The powers language did not arise in a vacuum; he admits that they are classified as demons in Jewish thought and that they were “always” classified as personal, spiritual beings.⁴⁸⁶ But when he approaches Paul’s treatment of the subject, he scurries away from such an idea, identifying them as earthly power

⁴⁸³ Bufford, Rodger K. *Counseling and the Demonic*, Page 11.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, Page 12.

⁴⁸⁵ Berkhof, Hendrik. *Christ and the Powers*, Page 16.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, Pages 16-17.

structures, even as he mentions that “the language of 1 Corinthians 2:8 is more personal.”⁴⁸⁷

Berkhof plainly states, “One can even doubt whether Paul conceived of the powers as personal beings.”⁴⁸⁸

Yes, the subject of the powers is addressed, but it is couched in rhetoric of doubt and skepticism. Key contextual points from the canon and from Paul himself are minimalized to synthesize a world power construct that is free from malevolent spiritual beings. And so Berkhof “sets aside the thought that Paul’s Powers are angels” and advocates that they are an impersonal element of God’s universe.⁴⁸⁹ But all of this is neatly remedied by the close usage of “powers” and “spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” in Ephesians 6:12.⁴⁹⁰ Lincoln’s commentary says:

*This verse, which sets out the nature of the enemy, explains further why it is that believers need the divine armor if they are to stand. The spiritual and cosmic nature of the opposition makes such armor absolutely necessary. This is the only place in the Pauline corpus where believers are explicitly said to be in a battle against evil spirit powers.... In conformity with the contemporary worldview, the writer depicts human existence as under the influence of powers that work evil.*⁴⁹¹

Paul was referring to spiritual beings under the service of Satan, and we will never know exactly how much skepticism contributed to Berkhof’s conclusions. But for certain, we can claim that skepticism is the foe of Evangelical demonology, yet the Bible itself defends the reality and ontological personhood of the demonic.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, Page 23.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, Page 24.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, Page 26.

⁴⁹⁰ NASB.

⁴⁹¹ Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*, Page 443.

5.6.2 The Challenge of Empiricism and Anti-Supernaturalism

Where does much of this skepticism find its source? Empiricism. The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* defines it as: “The philosophical theory that all ideas are derived from experience, asserting that internal and external experience is the sole foundation of true knowledge and of science.”⁴⁹²

The elevation of experience as a primary criterion for knowledge can prove disastrous for biblical study. If no miracle has been performed and verified, why would one believe that miracles can occur? To use generalities, a biblical worldview is dependent on accepting divine revelation as the supreme source of knowledge, which grants order and meaning to all other truth.

Demonology itself is exceptionally vulnerable to an experience-dominant perspective. Especially in a culture which dismisses or redefines demonic actions, the reality of demons (and the supernatural in general) is questionable. When we are discussing invisible spiritual beings of great power and evil, it is no surprise that an empiricist, who looks for experience as evidence, would respond with doubt.

How should we, as a proponent for an Evangelical perspective on the demonic, respond to such questions? (1) We should highlight the experiences of Christians from other cultures and backgrounds. For those who emphasize experience, we must listen to many sources (rather than rushing to our own private conclusions), and multicultural Christian communities are an asset in this endeavor. (2) Empiricists must be instructed to recognize the unusual category of beings under debate. If someone were to assume a purely physical framework for discerning the reality of a physical object, one could presume a helpful outcome (though still flawed in some sense). But the idea of emphasizing natural observation and experience to weigh the reality of a

⁴⁹² Rausch, D. A. “Empiricism, Empirical Theology,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Page 353.

supernatural class of malevolent beings seems disingenuous, bound to fail from the outset. In the field of demonology, a bare empiricism appears to be a prejudicial method. (3) But we can also raise the fact that limited empirical data does exist. While no one has a caged demon available for testing (which is an unwise expectation for the study of supernatural beings), personal and cultural accounts abound. Of course, anecdotal evidence is notoriously troublesome, but when there is a preponderance of evidence concerning the demonic which spans continents, cultures, and centuries, some credence must be granted.⁴⁹³ Christian demonologists and counselors who specialize in this field (e.g. Bufford, Koch, and Dickason) should not be ignored. To those who desire experiments, Koch retorts, "... spontaneous occurrences provide more powerful evidence than experiments."⁴⁹⁴ And when we are considering the reality of the supernatural demonic powers, we should expect spontaneous interactions rather than the carefully controlled outcomes confined by a repeatable experiment.

While Christian demonology cannot address all the concerns (and skepticism) of the empiricist, revelation and the limited observations we do possess are satisfactory for reasonable dialogue. In essence, enough natural evidence exists to affirm a belief in biblical revelation on the demonic, but that evidence cannot convince on its own.

5.6.3 The Challenge of Sensationalism and Speculation

Demonology has been plagued by excess and baseless speculation. While well-meaning, the result of such overblown curiosity is a demonology that no longer represents the biblical material and its emphases. And the reality is this: the Bible is not predominantly concerned with developing a systematized demonology. Nor are demons central characters! The demonic

⁴⁹³ See section 3.2 for more on the near universal recognition of spiritual beings.

⁴⁹⁴ Koch, Kurt E. *Occult ABC*, Page 2.

powers are not readily integrated into every narrative, poem, and epistle. Therefore, an Evangelical demonology must be noticeably restrained by the text, lest we wander into needless and unsubstantiated speculation.

As an illustration, let us examine Shackleford's seventy-five page work - *Replacing the Fallen Angels*. Consider these excerpts from the opening statement of his first chapter.

The origin of choice was not in the perfect will of God though choice began in heaven. Satan developed and exercised choice in heaven strictly against the will of God. The result of his choice was war with God and His faithful angels in heaven, ejection from heaven and a sentence of death to be carried out at some point in the future.

Why did God not destroy Satan and his followers on the spot? He could have very easily. It appears that God reviewed quickly the effect of choice on individual angels. He reviewed the sentence of death for those angels who rebelled and replacing them with more created beings for heaven. As God reviewed all of His options, He developed a plan to give the replacements for the fallen angels (i.e. humans) a choice before He places them in their eternal positions and responsibilities in His kingdom.⁴⁹⁵

To summarize, Satan and his angels rebelled against God, and God decided to replace the demonic rebels with redeemed humans who are prepared for the presence of God.

To comment kindly, this hypothesis should be commended for its imagination but opposed for its speculative qualities. (Such inventiveness surely runs afoul of our criterion of historical fidelity in 5.3.3.) The Scriptures never articulate or indicate Shackleford's argument, and it is superfluous to the biblical message about the demonic and salvation. Though Jesus does

⁴⁹⁵ Shackleford, William A. *Replacing the Fallen Angels*, Page 3. Clarification added.

mention that the resurrected “neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven,” this is strictly referring to the cessation of marital responsibilities.⁴⁹⁶

What should we do with speculation and sensationalism, offered by Shackelford and others? We cannot simply refute speculation with Scripture, since oftentimes, the Bible does not directly comment. Rather, we must expose the groundlessness of the speculation (having no stable footing in the Word) and return to biblical themes and emphases.

5.7 Conclusion

Where have we been? We began this chapter by raising three specific points from our study of Kato which were especially relevant for our formulation of a fresh Evangelical demonology. With those in hand, we ventured into the criteria for engaging in such a project, and to that end, we set forth standards of biblical centrality, hermeneutical consistency, historical fidelity, and theological harmony. Then we delved into the task of composing the Evangelical demonology itself. Recognizing the biblical emphasis on the demonic’s activity, we led with their behavior before crystalizing their ontological status, personal nature, and corporate influence. But why does an Evangelical demonology matter? In answering that question, we argued that Evangelical demonology upholds the Bible’s reliability and salvation’s quality, along with supporting pastoral applications and assisting our growing multicultural Christian communities. Finally, we faced challenges to Evangelical demonology. We specifically addressed skepticism, empiricism, and speculation.

⁴⁹⁶ Matthew 22:30, NASB. “... there will be no marriage in the resurrected order. Jesus’ answer here must depend on supernatural knowledge. The concluding clause... ‘but they will be like the angels in heaven,’ must not be generalized to mean altogether or in every respect. The only point made here is that so far as marriage (and sex?) is concerned, human beings will be like the angels, i.e., not marrying.” (Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 14-28*, Page 641.)

Where are we going? Having analyzed the demonology of Byang Kato and presented an original Evangelical demonology, let us finish our study with a chapter which summarizes our major points, along with providing suggestions for further study.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Study

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, it behooves us to concisely summarize some of our key points, lest the arguments leave little or no mark upon us. What have we learned from our investigation of Kato? How does his demonology relate to soteriology and to multiculturalism? What criteria are critical for composing an Evangelical demonology? What are the primary contents of a demonology which maintains a fidelity to the biblical materials? These and other questions must be recapitulated and answered.

By reviewing the critical arguments of this effort, we are provided a suitable context by which we can consider areas which demand additional scholarship. It would be a sham to claim that this study is not without omissions, being a completely comprehensive demonology. This is not the case. Rather, we will provide suggestions for further study, in keeping with themes and arguments produced in this work. With that roadmap in mind, we must first turn to Kato's demonology.

6.2 A Summary of Byang Kato's Demonological Perspective

Kato's foray into demonology is fairly brief, yet his booklet *The Spirits* and the demonological references in *Pitfalls* (and elsewhere) provided some crucial points of clarity as we sought to prepare for our theologizing efforts concerning the demonic. In 2.5, we specifically highlighted three strengths of Kato's perspective.

He frames the discussion of the demonic in the attributes of the Creator. The spirits are created spirits, far diminished in quality, ability, and power to the Author of spirits. Kato rips away the fear which surrounds the subject by establishing the supremacy of the uncreated Spirit.

Spirits “may be stronger, wiser and faster than men, but still they cannot do everything as God can.”⁴⁹⁷ The knowledge of the biblical God and His superiority is Kato’s starting point for demonological study.

Kato also resists any and every action that would exalt, worship, or empower the demonic. All forms of false worship and seeking the assistance of spirits is opposed and repudiated. In keeping with the Scriptures, only God is elevated as the proper source of supernatural assistance for life and death.

Finally, Kato calmly avoids the temptation to deviate and present a demonology which is culturally exclusive, representing his background more than the Bible’s testimony concerning the demons. Rather than elevating a particular culture or philosophy, Kato aimed to produce, organize, and systematize a demonology which flows directly from Scripture, largely carrying out those ends. And his work illustrates how we should pursue a biblical demonology.

6.3 A Summary of the Proposed Evangelical Demonology in Chapter 5

After a thorough analysis and assessment of Kato’s demonology and its relationship to soteriology and multiculturalism, we set out to produce a new Evangelical demonology, rooted in biblical exegesis and supported by Kato’s contributions.

We began by framing criteria for the effort. The predominant concern was that the Scriptures would be central to the study, shaping our demonology by biblical content and emphases. And a consistent hermeneutic was cited as a key criterion in accomplishing this as well, in order that we may represent the intention of the text itself, not anachronistically imposing our own sensibilities. We also brought forth historical Christianity and its perspective

⁴⁹⁷ Kato, Byang. *What the Bible Teaches: The Spirits*, Page 5.

on demonology as an asset, even as we sought theological harmony and consistency within our work.

As we transitioned into the content of demonology itself, we prioritized the malevolent activity of the demonic, placing it prior to discussions on their ontological standing. The Scripture predominantly describes demonic behavior, and we took steps to reflect that emphasis, as we detailed various categories for understanding their involvement in the created order. Then we synthesized some conclusions concerning their nature.

But why does an Evangelical demonology matter at all? We answered that question by stating that demonology does have purpose. It upholds the Bible's reliability. It forces us to present a robust soteriology. It supplies crucial pastoral applications for Christian living. And finally, a biblical demonology provides the proper soil for the growth of multicultural cooperation and cohesion.

Yet our Evangelical demonology is not without challenges, and we specifically responded to three of them. Especially in the western world, skepticism reigns concerning the reality and personhood of demons. We also recognized empiricism's influence in stirring such doubts and anti-supernaturalism. Supplying the work of Shackleford as an example, rampant speculation was the last challenge, and thankfully, the non-sensationalistic tone of the Scriptures answers such attitudes.

6.4 The Practical Consequences of an Evangelical Demonology

After structuring and fleshing out an Evangelical demonic, what are the practical ramifications for the reader? Here are three that may serve the academic, the lay person, and the church itself.

First, after a fresh look at the demonology of the Scripture, academics should listen. The temptation is often to dismiss the testimonies of pastors and deliverance practitioners as the ramblings of uncritical thinkers. The biblical materials should lead us toward a cautious consideration, listening to and dialoguing with the contributions of those who frequently lie outside of academia's favor.

Second, demonology, not only demonological language, has a place within the church. If we truly desire to train well-rounded disciples who are equipped with the doctrines of the Scriptures, we cannot help but occasionally address the demonic and present our response to their vile activities, in the context of God's overarching sovereignty.

Third, while the Scriptures portray examples of demonic activities, the Bible does not categorically list every scheme and machination of the demonic for all of history. An Evangelical Demonology supplies us a framework for discernment, in order that we may live wisely. Because of this, we should not only listen to those involved with these studies, but we must also heed their warnings, lest we act unaware of the enemy's ongoing schemes.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Study

Our endeavor to stake out a new Evangelical demonology has not been comprehensive. Many tertiary issues have been left unaddressed, leaving plenty of fertile ground for future efforts and studies. What specifically stands out, meriting further consideration? Let us mention two particular suggestions.

First, in section 5.4.4, we analyzed how the demonic exerted its influence in corporate spheres of influence, including the family and the church. But we also waded into their relationship to politics and national leadership. However, this subject deserves further

exploration, solely focusing on the demonic powers and politics. Although authors like Migliore (*The Power of God and the gods of Power*) and Wink have treated this arena, a distinctly Evangelical investigation, upholding the ontological personhood of the demonic, would be profitable.

Second, in section 5.6.3, we bemoaned the plethora of sensationalistic speculations that often surround demonology in Christian circles. While we addressed the problem in general, a sustained treatment of the problem and its effects upon biblical demonology would be useful. Such a project could serve as a theological tool to “clear the field of debris” for Evangelical demonology.

6.6 Conclusion

On page one, we asked, “Why Demonology?” And we discovered that the subject is difficult to avoid, even as we browsed the news. People are already talking about the demonic, and many presume that they are encountering these mephistophelean beings. But precisely discerning their nature, actions, and intentions is far from straightforward throughout the nations.

Into this world filled with denials and fears concerning the demonic, the Lord speaks by the enlightening Word. We can finally grasp the world as it actually is, including the dark powers which deceive and destroy among us. Hope displaces fear, chasing the shadows away as we walk in the light of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Biblical demonology answers our pleas for freedom, rescuing us from the pitfalls of our own demonological musings and cultural remedies. Illumining by the Word and the Spirit, Christ still delivers. We need not cower any longer.

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